

فَضْلُ الْعِلْمِ وَالْعُلَمَاءِ

وَرَبِّيَّةٌ

أَبْنَاءُ الْأَصْدِقَاءِ بِمَكَانَةِ الْعِلْمِ وَالْعِلَمَاءِ

THE MERIT OF
Knowledge
& Scholars

Ra'īs al-Mutakallimīn
Shaykh Naqī 'Alī Khān

Translated and Compiled by
Sayyid Muḥammad Zarqānī

مِثْقَالُ الْعِلْمِ وَالْعَمَلِ

وَالْيَقِينِ

أَبْنَاءُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالرَّبِيبِ كِتَابُ الْعِلْمِ وَالْعَمَلِ

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ŞADR AL-'ULAMĀ

Şadr al-'Ulamā Imām al-Nahw al-Sayyid Ghulām al-Jilānī al-Meruthī ؒ was an erudite scholar of the last century. He was born on the 11th of Ramadān 1893 in Dādōn, a large city in India. He studied from many luminaries of the Ahl al-Sunnah: from the likes of Şadr al-Shari'ah 'Allāmah Amjad 'Alī al-'Azamī ؒ and Şadr al-Afāḍil al-Sayyid Na'im al-Din al-Murādabādī ؒ. Later, he pledged allegiance to 'Alā Hadrat Ashraf al-Mashāikh al-Shāh al-Sayyid 'Alī Hussain al-Ashrafī al-Jilānī ؒ and was granted Ijazah and Khilāfah in al-Silsilah al-Ashrafyah. He taught the religious sciences for half a century and produced great leaders of the Ahl al-Sunnah such as: Muballigh al-Islām 'Allamah Shāh Ahmad Nūrānī ؒ, Shāriḥ al-Bukhārī 'Allamah Sharf al-Haq al-Amjadī ؒ and Rehān al-Millah 'Allamah Rehān Ridā Khān al-Qādirī ؒ. He left behind major works, especially in the science of Nahw.

His famous works consist of —

- *Bashir al-Qarī Sharḥ Ṣahih al-Bukhārī*
- *Bashir al-Nājiyah Sharḥ al-Kāfiyah*
- *al-Bashir al-Kāmil bi ḥal Sharḥ Miat 'Amil*
- *al-Bashir Sharḥ Nahw Mir*

This mountain of knowledge left this mundane world on the 8th of May 1978.

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SADR UL ULAMA ACADEMY

This academy was established on Thursday 12th January 2017 in the presence of many great scholars; namely, Muftī al-'Azam Pakistān Muftī Ashraf al-Qādir and Ustādh al-'Ulamā Shaykh al-Hādith Muftī Aslam al-Bandyalwī. It was established by Fakhr Ahl al-Sunnah Haqirat 'Allamah al-Sayid Muhammad 'Irfānī Miya Šāhib Qibla, who is the son of Hudūr Sadr al-'Ulamā ؒ.

Sadr ul Ulama Academy was established to propagate the works and teachings of Hudūr Sadr al-'Ulamā ؒ. It also aims to ease the acquaintance of knowledge for English speaking Muslims; this is by providing them with literature in the English language that shall be used to teach the Dars e Nizami syllabus. Another great aim of this academy is to translate Islamic literature from Arabic and Urdu to the English language, to allow those settled in the western countries to benefit from the works of our great scholars of the past.

We would like to thank all those who have helped towards our works; whether that be in the form of proofreading, composing or financillay supporting us. May Allah ؒ reward them all for their efforts and shower mercy upon them.

Hereby, we dedicate all our works and efforts to the blessed soul of Sadr al-Ulama ؒ and the entire Muslim Ummah.

We request the supplications of the Ahl al-Sunnah and its scholars for Allah ؒ to remove all difficulties and hardships from our path and make easy for us our mission.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

BIRTH

Taj al-'Ulamā, Ra's al-Mucakallimīn, 'Allamah Mawlānā Naqī 'Alī Khān ؒ was born on the 1st of Rajab in 1246AH/ 1830AC in Dhakhira, Barcilly.

EDUCATION AND RELIGIOUS UPBRINGING

He sought the rational and traditional sciences at the hands of his blessed father, 'Allamah Mawlānā Ridā 'Alī Khān ؒ, who is also responsible for his religious upbringing. He possessed expertise in various sciences and subjects. It was as though he was an ocean of knowledge.

RELIGIOUS WORKS

His works exist in the form of lecturing, teaching and authoring. He sacrificed his entire life in preaching the religion and defending the honour of the Propehr ؐ.

He has authored many books on various subjects and topics. His son, 'Alā Haqirat Imām Ahmad Ridā Khān ؒ has mentioned over 25 of his written works.

Some of the published works are —

- *Surūr al-Qulub fī Dhikr al-Mahbūb*
- *al-Kalām al-Awḍāḥ fī Tafṣīr Sūrah Alam Nashrah*

- *Jawahir al-Bayān fī Asrār al-Arkān*
- *Aḥsan al-Wi'ā li Ādāb al-Du'ā*
- *Usūl al-Rashād li Qam' Mabāni al-Ḥasād*
- *Faḍl al-'Ilm wa al-'Ulāmā*

Whilst being a great orator and a prolific author he was also a renowned teacher. His greatest students include 'Alā Hadrat Imām Ahmad Ridā Khān ؒ and Hadrat Mawlānā Hasan Ridā Khān ؒ, his two sons.

DEMISE

He left this mundane world on the 30th Dhul al-Qa'dah 1297AH/1886CE at the age of 51. He was buried at the feet of his beloved father ؒ.

May Allah ؒ shower countless blessings upon his blessed grave.

FOREWORD

All praise is to Allāh ؒ; the All-Knowing. May peace, blessings, and salutations descend upon the perfected chosen one who knew what came before and what is to come after; the beloved of Allāh ؒ; our master, the Messenger of Allāh ؒ; and upon his family and companions, the upholders of etiquette and honour.

"Between the Prophets ؑ and the one whom death approaches - whilst seeking knowledge in order to revive Islam - is one level in Paradise."

"Verily, the 'Ulamā are the inheritors of the Prophets ؑ who leave only their knowledge behind as their legacy; not dirham, nor dinar."

This translation of 'The Merit of Knowledge and Scholars' by Shaykh Muḥammad Naqī 'Alī Khān al-Qādirī ؒ expands on the methodology of the scholars - discussing the virtues of seeking sacred knowledge and the merits that ensue.

This book is a must have for all students of knowledge who wish to combine sincere intentions with the best of etiquette; with both their teachers and their study of the deen.

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مَنْ شَاءَ الْعِلْمَ وَالْعَمَلِ

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INTRODUCTION

After praising Allāh ﷻ and sending salutations upon the Prophet ﷺ, what follows are some virtues and benefits of religious knowledge which have been compiled to exhilarate the believers towards seeking religious knowledge.

KNOWLEDGE IS THE PIVOT OF RELIGION

Imām al-Ghazālī ﷺ writes, "Knowledge is the foundation of all and is the leader of the religion."¹ In reality, there is no virtue in the world or the hereafter and faith is incomplete without its acquaintance.

بِ عِلْمٍ تَمَوَّلُ فِئَاةَ شَنَاةِ

"Without knowledge you cannot gain cognisance of Allāh ﷻ"

In light of the above statement it has been stated that there is no path closer to the One (Allāh ﷻ) than the path of knowledge and that there is nothing more detestable to Allāh ﷻ than ignorance.

KNOWLEDGE IS LIFE AND IGNORANCE IS DEATH

الْعِلْمُ بَابُ اللَّهِ الْأَقْرَبُ وَالْجَهْلُ أَكْظَمُ حِجَابِ

بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَ اللَّهِ

¹ Ghazālī, *Muḥammad, ḥayā Uloom al-Dīn*, Beirut, Dar al-Salār, Vol. 1, p. 105

“Knowledge is the closest door to Allāh ﷻ and ignorance is the greatest veil between you and Allāh ﷻ.”

Knowledge brings life, rather, it is life and ignorance brings death, rather, it is death.

لَا تَعْجَبْ عَلَى الْجَهْلِ حَيْثُ
فَدَاكَ مِثٌّ وَ تَوْبَهُ كَفٌّ

“Do not be surprised at the jewellery of the ignorant!
For he is dead and his garment is a shroud.”²

If there were something more virtuous than knowledge in the sight of Allāh ﷻ, Hadrat Ādam ؑ would have been granted that virtue in comparison to the Angels. When even the glorification of the Angels was not equivalent to the Knowledge of the Names of everything which was granted to Hadrat Ādam ؑ, then what must be the greatness of the Knowledge of Essences and realities of things and other religious sciences?

تیس کن زگستان من بہار من

“Imagine (the state of) my blossom from my garden.”

² Nasafi, *Makdillah, Tafsiṁ al-Nasafi, Beirut, Dar al-Maʿrifah, 2000, p. 409*

THE VIRTUES OF SCHOLARS IN LIGHT OF QUR'ĀNIC STATEMENTS

Allāh ﷻ states —

شَهِدَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ۖ وَ الْوَحْدَ كَيْتَهُ ۖ وَ أُولُو
الْوَلِيَّةِ قَائِلًا بِالْقِسْطِ¹

“Allāh has given witness that there is none worthy of worship (God) except Him — and the angels and the scholars also give witness, established with justice (with truth).” (Qur'ān: 3:18)

Three virtues of knowledge can be proven from this —

Firstly, Allāh ﷻ mentions the scholars alongside Himself ﷻ and the Angels which is such a status that bears no limit.

Secondly, Allāh ﷻ makes the scholars a witness of His ﷻ Oneness alongside the Angels. Furthermore, He ﷻ makes their testimony a proof of His ﷻ Divinity.

Thirdly, Allāh ﷻ classifies the testimony of scholars as being as reliable as the testimony of the Angels.

THE STATUS OF THE TESTIMONY OF A SCHOLAR

In this verse, Allāh ﷻ states that His ﷻ testimony, and that of the scholars, is sufficient —

قُلْ كَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ لَا مَن عِندَنَا

عِلْمُ الْكَافِرِ

“Proclaim, Allāh ﷻ is a Sufficient Witness between me and you, and (so is) he who has knowledge of the Book.” (Qur’ān: 13:43)

THE LOFTY STATUS

يَرْفَعُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ

دَرَجَاتٍ

“Allāh ﷻ will raise the believers among you, and those given knowledge, to high ranks; and Allāh ﷻ is aware of your deeds.” (Qur’ān: 58:11)

Consequently, it has been acknowledged that knowledge just like faith is also a cause of an increase in prominence.

THE PERFECTION OF FAITH

وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ يَقُولُونَ آمَنَّا بِهِ لَا مَحَلَّ مِنْ

عِنْدَ رَبِّنَا وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ

“and those having sound knowledge say, “We believe in it, all of it is from our Lord”; and none accept guidance except the men of understanding.” (Qur’ān: 3:77)

This verse denotes the perfection of faith and actions of the people of knowledge and their great servitude.

ONLY THE KNOWLEDGEABLE FEAR

إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ

“Only the people of knowledge fear Him ﷻ” (Qur’ān: 35:28)

The reason for this limitation is clear. Until a person does not fully know of the Wrath and the Sovereignty of Allāh ﷻ, the description of Hell and the horrors of the Day of Judgment, then he cannot gain the essence of fear. The details of the above are only known by the knowledgeable.

THE MEANING OF MAWLAWI

وَالَّذِينَ كُونُوا رَبَّيْنَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تُعَلِّمُونَ الْكِتَابَ وَ
بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَدْرُسُونَ

“But he will surely say, “Be sincere worshippers of Allāh ﷻ, because you teach the Book and you preach from it.” (Qur’ān: 3:79)

From this it is apparent that from the requirements of knowledge is that a person distances himself from the world and becomes only Allāh’s ﷻ and only turns to Him ﷻ. For this reason a scholar is known as Mawlawi, i.e. belonging to the Mawla, meaning a man of Allāh ﷻ.

POSSESSORS OF WISDOM

وَمَنْ يُؤْتَ الْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ أُوتِيَ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا

“And whoever receives wisdom has received abundant goodness.” (Qur’ān: 3:269)

It is clear that the one who has been given an abundance of goodness, his status will also be towering.

THE COMPREHENDERS OF THE QUR’ĀN

وَتِلْكَ الْأَمْثَالُ لِنُفْرِمِهَا لِلنَّاسِ ۚ وَمَا يَعْقِلُهَا إِلَّا
الْعُلَمَاءُ

“And We illustrate these examples for mankind; and none except the knowledgeable understand them.” (Qur’ān: 29:43)

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ أُوْتُوا الْعِلْمَ وَيُؤْتِكُمْ اللَّهُ خَيْرَ
مِنَ الْأَمْثَالِ ۚ لَنْ أَمِنَ وَحِيلَ مَا لَكُمْ

“And said those who were given the knowledge, “Woe to you – the reward of Allāh ﷻ is better for one who accepts faith and does good deeds” (Qur’ān: 28:80)

Hence, it is manifest that only the scholars truly understand the rank and status of the hereafter as they are the only ones who understand the illustrative examples placed before mankind.

THE KNOWLEDGEABLE AND THE IGNORANT ARE NOT
EQUAL

قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

“Proclaim, “Are the knowledgeable and the ignorant equal?” (Qur’an: 39:9)

This means that the ignorant do not reach the status of a scholar in any way.

THE VIRTUES OF SCHOLARS IN LIGHT OF THE
PROPHETIC NARRATIONS

THE SUPERIORITY OF A SCHOLAR OVER A WORSHIPPER

It has been narrated on the authority of Imām al-Tirmidhi رحمه الله that two people, a worshipper and a scholar, were mentioned before the Prophet ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ said —

فَضْلُ الْعَالِمِ عَلَى الْعَابِدِ كَفَضْلِ عَلِيٍّ عَلَى أَدْنَاكُمْ

‘The superiority of a scholar over a worshipper is like my superiority over the least of you.’³

KNOWLEDGE IS A MEANS TO FORGIVENESS

It has been narrated that when the Almighty ﷻ shall be stationed on the Throne on the Day of Judgement to judge the people, He ﷻ shall say to the scholars —

إِنِّي أَمْ أَجْعَلُ عَلِيمِي وَ حَلِيمِي فِيكُمْ إِلَّا وَ أَنَا أُرِيدُ
أَنْ أَغْفِرَ لَكُمْ وَ لَا أَبَايَ

‘Verily I did not place My Knowledge and My Kindness in you, but I intend to forgive you and I do not mind.’⁴

³ Tirmidhi, *Muhamamad, Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, Beirut, Dar al-Fikr, 999, Vol. 4 P. 33

⁴ Taberant, *al-Mufjam al-Kabir*, Beirut, Dar Ihya al-Turath al-‘Arabi, 2001, Vol. 2 P. 84

THE MOST GENEROUS ONE

It has been narrated on the authority of Imām al-Bayhaqī رحمه الله that the Prophet ﷺ said —

اللَّهُ أَجْوَدُ جُودًا ثَمَّ أَنَا أَجْوَدُ بَنِي آدَمَ وَأَجْوَدُ مِنْ
بِعْدِي رَجُلٌ عَلِمَ عَلِيًّا فَتَمَّرَهُ

‘Allah ﷻ is the most generous and from amongst the people, I am the most generous and after me, the most generous of them is he who seeks knowledge and then propagates it.’⁵

THE BLOOD OF THE MARTYRS AND THE INK OF THE SCHOLARS

It has been narrated on the authority of Imām al-Dhahabī رحمه الله that the Prophet ﷺ said —

يُوزَنُ مِدَادُ الْعُلَمَاءِ وَ دَمُ الشُّهَدَاءِ فَيَرْجِحُ مِدَادُ
الْعُلَمَاءِ بِدَمِ الشُّهَدَاءِ

‘On the Day of Judgement the ink of the scholars and the blood of the martyrs shall be weighed. The ink of the scholars shall outweigh the blood of the martyrs.’⁶

⁵ Bayhaqī, *Abū Bakr, Shu'ab al-Imān*, Beirut, Dar Al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 2000, Vol. 2, p. 281

⁶ Qurraḥī, *Imn Akh al-Bar, Jamī' Bayān al-Ilm wa Faalihī*, Beirut, Dar Al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 2007, p. 48

THE SCHOLARS ARE INTERCESSORS

It has authentically been narrated in *Ihya' al-'Ulūm* that —

‘On the Day of Judgement Allāh ﷻ shall command the worshippers and the soldiers “Enter Paradise!”. The scholars shall say “O my Lord, they only worshipped you and sacrificed their lives after our informing”. It shall be said “You (the scholars) are like some of the Angels in My Sight. Intercede! Your intercession shall be accepted”. Thereafter, the scholars shall intercede and enter Paradise.’⁷

THE VIRTUE OF ONE WHO DIES WHILST SEEKING KNOWLEDGE

It has also been stated in a prophetic narration that —

مَنْ جَاءَهُ الْمَوْتُ وَ هُوَ يَطْلُبُ الْعِلْمَ لِيُحْيِيَ بِهِ
الْإِسْلَامَ ، فَيُنْتَبِهُ دَرَجَةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ فِي
الْجَنَّةِ

‘The one whom death approaches whilst he is seeking knowledge so that he may revive Islam with it then between him and the Prophets ﷺ there shall be one rank in Paradise.’⁸

⁷ Ghazālī, *Muḥammad, Hyā' Ulūm al-Dīn*, Beirut, Dar al-Salām, Vol. 1, p. 56

⁸ Darīmī, *Makūlūh, Sunan al-Darīmī*, Beirut, Dar al-Kutub al-Arabi, 1986, Vol. 1, p. 112

THE REWARD OF SEVENTY RIGHTEOUS PEOPLE

Another prophetic narration states —

مَنْ تَعَلَّمَ بَابًا مِّنَ الْعِلْمِ لِيُعَلِّمَ النَّاسَ أُعْطِيَ
مِثْرًا مِّمَّا كَسَبَتْ سَبْعِينَ صِدِّيقًا

*'The one who studies one chapter of knowledge to teach others will be given the reward of seventy righteous people.'*⁹

SEEKERS OF KNOWLEDGE DWELL UNDER THE SHADE OF ANGELS

It has been stated in Ma'ālim al-Tanzīl that the Prophet ﷺ said —

*'The one who travels in search of knowledge the Angels give shade with their wings, the fish in the ocean, the skies and the earth make supplication for his/her forgiveness.'*¹⁰

⁹ Alauddin, Zaki al-Din, al-Tarḡhib wa al-Tarhīb, Beirut, Dar Al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 2012, Vol. 1 p. 53

¹⁰ Siyisani, Abu Dawūd, Sunan Abi Dawūd, Beirut, Dar Ihyā al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 2000, Vol. 3 p. 445

VIRTUES OF LOOKING AT A SCHOLAR

Imām al-Ghazālī رحمه الله has narrated that —

نَظْرَةٌ إِلَى الْعَالِمِ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِنْ عِبَادَةِ سَنَةٍ صِيَامِهَا
وَ قِيَامِهَا

*'To look at a scholar once is better than the prayers and the fasts of an entire year.'*¹¹

ALLĀH INTENDS GOOD FOR THE PEOPLE OF KNOWLEDGE

It has been narrated on the authority of Imām al-Bukhārī رحمه الله and Imām al-Tirmidhī رحمه الله with an authentic chain of transmission that the Prophet ﷺ said —

مَنْ يُرِدْ اللَّهُ بِهِ خَيْرًا يُعَفِّهِ فِي الدِّينِ
مَنْ يُرِدْ اللَّهُ بِهِ خَيْرًا يُعَفِّهِ فِي الدِّينِ
*'The one with whom Allāh ﷻ intends good He ﷻ grants him understanding of the religion.'*¹²

¹¹ Ghazālī, Muḥammad, Minhaj al-ʿAbidin, Beirut, Dar Al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 2008, p. 11

¹² Bukhārī, Muḥammad, Sahih al-Bukhārī, Cairo, Dar al-Hadith, 2004, Vol. 1 p. 41

It is stated in al-*Asḥbah wa al-Nazāir* that —

“Nobody is aware of their outcome, but a faqīh (jurist). He knows through the informing of The Truthful Informer (The Prophet ﷺ), that Allāh ﷻ intends good with him.”¹³

THE PROTECTOR FROM PUNISHMENT

In Durr al-Mukḥḥar it has been narrated from Ḥadīrat Ismāʿīl ibn Abī Rajā ﷺ that —

رَأَيْتُ مُحَمَّدًا فِي الْمَنَامِ فَقُلْتُ لَهُ: مَا فَعَلَ اللَّهُ بِكَ؟
فَقَالَ: عُفِّرَ لِي ثُمَّ قَالَ: لَوْ أَرَدْتُ أَنْ أُعَذِّبَكَ مَا
جَعَلْتُ هَذَا الْعِلْمَ فِيكَ

“I saw Imām Muḥammad ﷺ in my dream. I asked of his state, he replied, “Allāh ﷻ has forgiven me and He (Allāh ﷻ) said, “If I wanted to punish you, then I would not have bestowed you with knowledge.”¹⁴

THE INHERITORS OF THE PROPHETS ﷺ

Imām Abū Dāwūd ﷺ narrates on the authority of Ḥadīrat Abū Dardā ﷺ that the Prophet ﷺ said —

مَنْ سَلَكَ طَرِيقًا يَطْلُبُ فِيهِ عِلْمًا سَلَكَ اللَّهُ
بِهِ طَرِيقًا مِنْ طُرُقِ الْجَنَّةِ وَإِنَّ الْمَلَائِكَةَ لَتَضَعُ
أَجْنِحَتَهَا رِضًا لِطَالِبِ الْعِلْمِ وَإِنَّ الْعَالِمَ لَيَسْتَفِيرُهُ
لَهُ مِنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَّاتِ فِي
جَوْفِ الْأَءِ وَإِنَّ فَضْلَ الْعَالِمِ عَلَى الْعَابِدِ كَفَضْلِ
الْقَمَرِ بَيْتِلَةَ الْبَدْرِ عَلَى سَائِرِ الْكَوَاكِبِ وَإِنَّ الْعُلَمَاءَ
وَرِثَةُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَإِنَّ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ لَمْ يُورَثُوا دِينَارًا وَلَا
دِرْهَمًا وَرَثُوا الْعِلْمَ فَمَنْ أَخَذَهُ أَخَذَ بِحِطِّ وَافِرٍ

“The one who treads a path in search of knowledge, Allāh ﷻ places him on one of the paths to Paradise. Verily, the Angels spread forth their wings for the contentment of the student and all those of the earth and all those of the skies seek forgiveness on behalf of a scholar; to the extent that the fish in the water (do too). Verily, the greatness of a scholar over a worshipper is like the greatness of the moon of the 14th night over all the stars. Indeed, the scholars are the inheritors of the Prophets ﷺ and the Prophets ﷺ do not

¹³ Ibn Nuqaym, *Zayn al-Dīn, al-Asḥbah wa al-Nazāir*, Beirut, Dar Al-Kotob al-Ilmiyyah, 1998, p. 377

¹⁴ Ḥakīmī, *Ala al-Dīn, Durr al-Mukḥḥar*, Beirut, Dar al-Maʿrifah, 1999, Vol. 1, p. 143

leave Dirham and Dinar as inheritance, rather they have left knowledge as inheritance. Therefore, the one who gains knowledge has undoubtedly gained a large share.¹⁵

TRIBUTE IN THE REALM OF ANGELS

It has been narrated on the authority of Imām al-Muslim رضي that —

مَنْ سَلَكَ طَرِيقًا يَلْتَمِسُ فِيهِ عِلْمًا سَهَّلَ اللَّهُ لَهُ
بِهِ طَرِيقًا إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ وَمَا اجْتَمَعَ قَوْمٌ فِي بَيْتٍ مِنْ
بُيُوتِ اللَّهِ يَتْلُونَ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَيَتَلَاوُ سُوْرَةً مِنْهُ إِلَّا
رَزَقَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّكِينَةَ وَغَسَّطَتْهُمْ الرِّيحُ الْوَقِيَّةُ وَحَسَنَتْهُمْ
الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَذَكَرَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِيمَنْ عِنْدَهُ

‘The one who treads a path in search of knowledge, Allāh ﷻ shall make easy for him the path to Paradise. When some people gather in one of the houses of Allāh ﷻ and recite the book of Allāh ﷻ and teach each other, tranquillity descends on them, mercy encompasses them, the Angels surround them from all directions and Allāh ﷻ mentions them to those close to him.’¹⁶

Allāh makes apparent to the Angels their qualities and His ﷻ consent.

THE VIRTUES OF ATTENDING GATHERINGS OF KNOWLEDGE

It has been narrated on the authority of Ḥaḍḥrat Abū Dharr رضي that —

حُضِرْتُ بِجَلْسِ ذِكْرِ أَفْضَلُ مِنْ صَلَاةِ أَلْفِ رَكْعَةٍ
وَ حُضِرْتُ بِجَلْسِ عِلْمٍ أَفْضَلُ مِنْ عِبَادَةِ أَلْفِ
مَرِيضٍ وَ حُضِرْتُ بِجَلْسِ عِلْمٍ أَفْضَلُ مِنْ سُجُودِ
أَلْفِ جَنَارَةٍ. قِيلَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مِنْ فِرَاءَةِ الْقُرْآنِ
فَقَالَ: وَ هَلْ تَنْفَعُ فِرَاءَةُ الْقُرْآنِ إِلَّا بِعِلْمٍ؟

‘To attend the gatherings of knowledge is more virtuous than performing a thousand units of prayer, visiting a thousand sick people and attending a thousand funerals. Someone questioned, “O’ Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, what about the recitation of the Qur’ān?” (i.e. is attending a gathering of knowledge more virtuous than reciting the Qur’ān too?) He ﷺ replied “Does the Qur’ān benefit without knowledge?”¹⁷

This means that the benefit of the Qur’ān cannot be attained but through knowledge.

¹⁵ Siyāsat, Abū Darda, Sunan Abī Darda, Beirut, Dar Iḥyā al-Ṭurāth al-ʿArabī, 2000. Vol. 4 P. 444

¹⁶ Nishāpūrī, Muslim, Sahīḥ al-Muslim, Beirut, Dar Iḥn Ḥazm, 1998. P. 447

¹⁷ Makki, Abū Talḥ, Qur’ān al-Qulūb, Beirut, Dar Al-Koob al-ʿIlmiyyah, 2005. Vol. 1 P. 257

MORE WEIGHTY THAN A THOUSAND WORSHIPPERS

Imām Muḥyī al-Sunnah al-Baḡhawī رحمه الله writes in *Ma'ālim al-Tanzīl* that the Messenger of Allāh صلى الله عليه وسلم said —

فَقِيَّةٌ وَاحِدٌ أَثَمُّ عَلَيَّ الشَّيْطَانِ مِنْ أَلْفِ عَابِدٍ

'One faqīh (jurist) is more weighty (tough) on Satan than a thousand worshippers.'¹⁸

The case is evident. A worshipper protects himself from Hell whereas a scholar guides a whole universe of people and warns them of the deception of Satan.

THE DESCENSION OF MERCY ON SCHOLARS

It has been narrated on the authority of Imām al-Tirmidhī رحمه الله that —

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ وَأَهْلَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
حَتَّى النَّمْلَةَ فِي جُحْرِهَا وَحَتَّى الْحُوتَ لَيُصَلُّونَ
عَلَى مُعَلِّمِ النَّاسِ الْخَيْرِ

"Verily, Allāh صلى الله عليه وسلم and His Angels and all the creatures of the world and all the creatures of the skies; to the extent that an ant in its hole and the fish, they send salutations upon the one who teaches people good."¹⁹

¹⁸ Tirmidhī, *Muḥammad, Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, Beirut, Dar al-Fikr, 1993, Vol. 4, p. 311

¹⁹ Tirmidhī, *Muḥammad, Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, Beirut, Dar al-Fikr, 1993, Vol. 4, p. 313

CLOSEST TO THE RANK OF PROPHETHOOD

Imām al-Ghazālī رحمه الله narrates that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said —

أَوْزُبُ النَّاسِ مِنْ دَرَجَةِ النَّبِيِّ أَهْلُ الْعِلْمِ وَأَهْلُ
الْجِهَادِ

'The closest people to the rank of prophethood are the scholars and soldiers.'²⁰

This means that the rank of the scholars and soldiers is the closest to the ranks of the Prophets صلى الله عليه وسلم as the scholars indicate to that which the Prophets صلى الله عليه وسلم brought and the soldiers fight with swords for that which the Prophets صلى الله عليه وسلم brought.

THE BENEFIT OF KNOWLEDGE AFTER DEATH

It has been narrated on the authority of Imām al-Muslim رحمه الله that —

إِذَا مَاتَ ابْنُ آدَمَ انْقَطَعَ عَمَلُهُ إِلَّا مِنْ ثَلَاثٍ:
صَدَقَةٍ جَارِيَةٍ، أَوْ عِلْمٍ يُنْتَفَعُ بِهِ، أَوْ وَلَدٍ صَالِحٍ
يَدْعُو لَهُ

²⁰ Ghazālī, *Muḥammad, Ihya' Ulum al-Dīn*, Beirut, Dar al-Sādir, Vol. 1, p. 20

“When someone dies his good deeds terminate, except for three things:

1. Ṣadaqah Jariyah which he left behind.
2. Knowledge from which people will benefit.
3. Pious offspring that shall pray for him.”²¹

This means that the benefits of these three things shall continue even after death.

THE FRIEND OF ALLĀH ﷺ

It was said to Hadrat Ibrahim ﷺ —

يَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ إِنِّي عَلَيْكَ عَلِيمٌ
كُلِّ عَلِيمٌ

“O Ibrahim ﷺ, I am the All-Knowing: I befriend all the knowledgeable”²²

This means that knowledge is My attribute and the one who possesses knowledge, is My beloved!

²¹ Nishapuri, Muslim, Sahih al-Muslim, Beirut, Dar ibn hazm, 1998, Vol. p. 886

²² Qurṭubi, Ibn Abd al-Kar, Jamī' Bayān al-Īm wa Fadhlihi, Beirut, Dar Al-Karab al-Ilmiyyah, 2007, p. 70

THE SUPERIORITY OF A SCHOLAR

Hadrat Mawla 'Alī ؑ said —

الْعَالِمُ أَفْضَلُ مِنَ الصَّائِمِ الْمَجَاهِدِ

“A scholar is greater than a soldier who fasts during the day and worships during the night”²³

BETTER THAN WORSHIPPING ALL NIGHT

Someone once asked the Mujtahid Hadrat Abū Bakr ؑ that —

سُئِلَ الْفَقِيهَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ عَنْ قِرَاءَةِ الْقُرْآنِ أَمْهُ أَفْضَلُ
لِلْمَنْعَةِ أَوْ دِرَاسَةِ الْفِقْهِ؟ قَالَ: حُكْمِي عَنِ الْفَقِيهِ
أَبِي مُطِيعٍ أَنَّهُ قَالَ: النَّظَرُ فِي كُتُبِ أَصْحَابِنَا مِنْ
غَيْرِ سَاعٍ أَفْضَلُ مِنْ قِيَامِ لَيْلَةٍ

“Is it better for a faqih (jurist) to recite the Qur’ān or to teach jurisprudence (fiqh)? He replied, “It has been narrated from Abū Muṭī’ ؑ that merely looking at the books of our companions (jurists) without the intention of studying them is better than worshipping the entire night.”²⁴

²³ Ghazali, Muhammad, Ḥyā' Uḷam al-Dīn, Beirut, Dar al-Salār.

²⁴ Ibn Māzūh, Muḥammad, al-Muḥit al-Burhānī, Beirut, Dar Al-Karab al-Ilmiyyah, 2004, Vol. 1, p. 132

Ḥadīrat Abu Dardā رضي الله عنه said —

لَا تَذْكُرُ فِيهِ الْفَعَّةَ سَاعَةً، أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِنْ قِيَامِ لَيْلَةٍ

“To me, learning one ruling is more notable than worshipping for the entire night.”²⁵

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE DEATH OF A SCHOLAR AND A WORSHIPPER

Ḥadīrat ‘Umar رضي الله عنه said —

لَوْ تَأْتَى أَلْفَ عَائِدٍ قَائِمِ اللَّيْلِ صَالِمِ النَّهَارِ أَهْوَنُ
مِنْ مَوْتِ الْعَاقِلِ الْبَصِيرِ بِحَلَالِ اللَّهِ وَحَرَائِمِهِ

“The death of a thousand worshippers who would stand (in worship) during the night and fast during the day is not equivalent to the death of one scholar who would remain patient on what has been made *halal* and *ḥarām*

by Allāh ﷻ.”²⁶

²⁵ Bayhaḥī, Abū Bakr Kharrūḥ, *al-Faḥr wa al-Mufaḥḥiḥ*, Cairo, Dar Ibn al-Jawzī, 2007, Vol. 1, p. 102.

²⁶ Qurṭubī, Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, Jamī‘ Bayān al-‘Ilm wa Faḥḥih, Beirut, Dar Al-Koob al-‘Ilmiyyah, 2007, p. 42.

THE STATUS OF A SCHOLAR IN THE SKIES

Imām al-Chazālī رحمه الله writes that —

“Ḥadīrat ‘Isā عليه السلام said, “A scholar who acts upon his knowledge is called ‘Azīm (meaning a great person) in the kingdom of the skies.”²⁷

Similarly, there are countless merits and virtues of this attribute (knowledge) which have been narrated in Ahādīth.

Merely the fact that this attribute is that of the One (Allāh ﷻ) and the Prophet ﷺ suffices as its merit.

²⁷ Ibn ‘Arabī, *Aḥmad, al-Zuhd*, Beirut, p. 97.

OBSTACLES IN SEEKING KNOWLEDGE AND THEIR SOLUTIONS

There are 8 obstacles of this attribute (knowledge):

OBSTACLE 1: SATAN

Satan's enmity against knowledge is greater than his enmity against anything else. Also, he places innumerable devilish insinuations in the heart to prevent people from seeking knowledge and does not do so to prevent from anything else.

The method of dispelling this obstacle is facile. When a Muslim thinks of the merits and virtues of knowledge and the reward of a student of knowledge then he shall definitely not listen to Satan. What status do the devilish insinuations of the cursed one hold in comparison to the verses and prophetic narrations?

OBSTACLE 2: THE SOUL

The soul dislikes strife and hard work and is inclined towards relaxation and comfort. However, when one acknowledges that this world is temporary, it shall perish and that the hereafter is eternal. He knows that if he chooses to strive in seeking knowledge here; which is not free from a thousand benevolences then he will gain great statuses in the hereafter, this will ease the strife and hard work; to the extent that after a short while he shall gain such pleasure and delicacies that if he does not read a book for a day, he becomes agitated.

OBSTACLE 3: THE CREATION

Connection with the creation is an obstacle in seeking knowledge. However, at first the seeker can allocate a short amount of time for this and once he gains the sweetness of knowledge, he himself shall begin to dislike everything but books.

هم نشننے ب از کتاب خواه
 که مصاحب بود گاه و بے گاه
 این چنینی هدم و رفیق که دید
 که نہ رنجید و ہم نہ رنجانید

"Do not wish for a better companion than a book; for this is a companion at all times. Has anyone seen such a companion and friend? The one who is not upset nor makes (you) upset."

OBSTACLE 4: SEEKING FAME

It is clear that respect of this world in comparison to the respect of the hereafter holds no reality. The one who abandons knowledge, which is the cause of honour in the hereafter, for the world then in reality he has placed himself in vileness. As for the one who gives precedence to knowledge over the respect and greatness of the world then Allāh ﷻ grants him respect of this world too.

THE GOVERNORS OF THE KINGS

Hadrat Abū Aswad ؓ said —

‘Nothing is greater in respect than knowledge. The kings are the governors of all and the scholars are the governors of the kings.’²⁸

Do you not see? Even in this era the verdicts given by the scholars are implemented by Muslims.

DO YOU WANT KNOWLEDGE OR KINGSHIP?

It has been narrated on the authority of Hadrat ibn ‘Abbās ؓ that —

‘Hadrat Sulaymān ؑ was given a choice between knowledge and wealth, i.e. take kingship and wealth or take knowledge. He ؑ chose knowledge. This way, he was also granted kingship and wealth.’²⁹

THE PROPHETS ﷺ AND KNOWLEDGE

O’ beloved, nothing is better than knowledge. The knowledge of names gave Hadrat Ādam ؑ the merit of prostration from the Angels. Mystic knowledge gave Hadrat Khadir ؑ the honour of teaching Hadrat Mūsā ؑ. Knowledge of interpretations gave Hadrat Yūsuf ؑ kingship of Cairo. Knowledge of the language of birds gave Hadrat Sulaymān ؑ a woman like Bilqīs. The knowledge of Hadrat ‘Īsā ؑ gave Hadrat Maryam ؑ redemption from the condemnation of people. One knowledgeable remark gave a weak ant such a status that Allāh ﷻ mentions its tale in the Qur’ān. Even the kingship of the entire world holds no rank or value with one who knows the rank and value of knowledge.

PLEASURE OF KNOWLEDGE

It has been narrated that once a man went to a king. The king said, “You are ignorant and are not worthy of serving us”. The man then went and sought knowledge and its pleasure from Imām al-Ghazālī ؒ. He also came to know of the tragedies of the world and the harms of keeping company with the kings and leaders. One day, the king called him and after testing him he said, “Now, you are worthy of serving us. You should have whatever status you desire”. He said, “Before, I was no use to you and now, you are no use to me. Before, you did not like me and now, I do not like you”.

²⁸ Ghazālī, *Muhammad, Hayat Ullam al-Din, Beirut, Dar al-Salīn, Vol. 1 p. 22*

²⁹ Razi, *Fakhr al-Din, al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr, Beirut, Dar Al-Koob al-Ilmiyyah, 2012, Vol 1 p. 400*

OBSTACLE 5: GAINING WEALTH

It is manifest that this temporary fortune (money) can never be equal to the eternal fortune (knowledge). Money remains in this world, however, knowledge goes with you in the grave and assists you at all times until it takes you to Paradise. Wealth decreases as you spend and knowledge increases as you teach. A wealthy person protects his wealth. However, knowledge protects the knowledgeable person. As for the one who gives precedence to seeking knowledge over acquiring wealth, Allāh ﷻ does not make him needy/dependent. The one who gains understanding of the religion of Allāh ﷻ, Allāh ﷻ removes from him that which troubles him and provides for him sustenance from where he cannot imagine.³⁰

OBSTACLE 6: FEAR OF OUTCOME

When someone thinks about the shortness of life and the scarcity of time then he worriedly says "Knowledge is a vast ocean; To cross it in this short amount of time is difficult". This thought is mere ignorance. In no instance can one gain this fortune (knowledge) completely; to the extent that even the Prophet ﷺ is commanded —

وَقُلْ رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا

"and pray, "My Lord, bestow me more knowledge."
(Qur'an: 20:114)

However, no student of knowledge is deprived.

³⁰ Ghazali, *Muhammad, Ihyā' Ulūm al-Dīn, Retiring, Dar al-Salār, Vol. 1 p. 21*

In conclusion, religious sciences bear no limit. The more you gain, the more it will benefit. Supposedly, if one does not gain the intended amount and dies in its search then he shall rise amongst the scholars on the Day of Judgement.

Is this benefit not enough? That you fear for your result. How beautifully has one said —

در راه تو بمرم گر چپ ترا نه بینم
بار خنلاص یابم از تنگ زندگانی

"I shall die in your way, even if I do not see you. Atleast I shall gain freedom from such a life"

SEVEN BENEFITS OF THE GATHERINGS OF SCHOLARS

Hadrat Faqih Abū Layth Samarqandi رحمته said —

"The one who attends the gathering of a scholar he gains seven benefits, even if he does not strive to attain them —

1. He is safeguarded from sins and immorality for as long as he remains in the gathering.
2. He is counted amongst the students.
3. He gains the reward of seeking knowledge.

4. He partakes from the mercy which descends on that gathering of knowledge.

5. He is in worship for as long as he listens to the intellectual talk.

6. When he does not understand a very intricate topic of theirs, he becomes heartbroken and is written amongst the heartbroken. (The dua of a heartbroken person is readily accepted.)

7. He comprehends the respect of knowledge and scholars and the vileness of ignorance and sinfulness."³¹

I say, "These are besides the reward which has been promised for looking at a scholar and attending his gathering."

OBSTACLE 7 & 8: NOT FINDING A COMPASSIONATE TEACHER AND WORRYING ABOUT LIVELIHOOD

Worrying about livelihood refers to those things which are necessary as any extra is indeed extra, one should not worry about those. These two (obstacles 7 and 8) in comparison to the other obstacles are most effective because what will the student learn if the teacher does not teach with compassion? Also, how is the student going to work hard in acquiring knowledge when he is not given sustenance?

³¹ Samarqandi, *Abu al-Layth, Tanbih al-Chajjihin, Kitabu, Dar al-Katob al-Arabi, 999, p. 217*

پراگندہ روزی پراگندہ دل
 "Poverty and destitution is restlessness and worry"

The greatest reason for the effectiveness of these two obstacles is that the solution for these two is not in the control of the students.

SERVING KNOWLEDGE AND SCHOLARS

ADDRESSING THE AFFLUENT PEOPLE OF ISLAM TO SUPPORT KNOWLEDGE

Yes, if the rich and the affluent sponsor one or two teachers and fix a specific bursary for the students then students will gain redemption from these two obstacles and they will strive in seeking knowledge with peace of mind. The reward which the student and teacher receive bears no limit. Similarly, in fact those who run the Islamic institutes receive even more reward; especially those who encourage others towards this good act.

SERVING KNOWLEDGE AND SCHOLARS

It has been stated in an authentic prophetic narration that —

الَّذِي عَلَى الْحِزِّ كَفَّاعِلُهُ

*'The one who guides others towards good is like his deer.'*²²

Other than this, there are many other prophetic narrations from the six major books of hadith which bear this meaning. The one who wishes can have a look. We must understand the fact that the reward of actions fluctuates according to time and state. For this reason the reward of the Ṣāḥabah رضي الله عنهم, those that gave their lives in the propagation of knowledge and supporting the religion, is much greater in rank than others. Therefore, those individuals who strive

²² *Tirmidhi, Muḥammad, Sunan al-Tirmidhi, Beirut, Dar al-Fikr, 1993, Vol. 4, p. 305*

in propagating knowledge and supporting the religion in these times, times in which Islam is weak, they shall gain more reward than those kings and leaders who strived in this field. This is because the kings and leaders possessed more power and wealth and in their times knowledge was increasing day by day. In contrast to the current era where people are infatuated with the love of the world and are fully focused in its acquisition. Knowledge of the religion is gradually decreasing. Nobody is studying, nor is anyone teaching. Unless we make radical changes in the near future there will be no sign of knowledge left in these countries and when there will be no knowledge, there will be no religion. From whom shall the people enquire about the obligatory and necessary actions and the rulings of fasting and prayer? From whom shall they question regarding the devilish insinuations of Satan and his objections? In the end, they will become misguided. As for those who remain steadfast on the religion, merely by following others then they will be Muslims only by name.

THE CAUSE OF THE DESTRUCTION OF THE CREATION

Imām Muḥyī al-Sunnah al-Baḡhawī رحمته الله narrates on the authority of Ḥadīth Saḥīḥ ibn Jubayr رضي الله عنه that —

*'The death of scholars is the sign of the destruction of a nation i.e. when the scholars die the people shall perish.'*²³

²³ *Ḥaḡhāwī, Abū Muḥammad, Tajsīr al-Baḡhawī, Beirut, Dar Al-Naṣab al-Ḥimīyāh, 2004, Vol. 2, p. 99*

Hadrat 'Aḥā al-Khurāsānī رحمته writes in the exegesis of this verse —

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا نَأْتِي الْأَرْضَ نَنْقُصُهَا مِنْ أَطْرَافِهَا

“Do they not perceive that We are reducing their dwellings from all directions?” (Qur’ān: 13:41)

“Reducing their dwellings” refers to the death of the scholars and jurists. This is because when the scholars shall not remain the creation shall become deprived of intellect, like bulls and horses. They shall become careless and free, like stray camels. At this particular time, order and the ruling system of the universe shall collapse. Murder, invasion, epidemics and plagues shall be widespread.

Thereafter the four corners of the earth shall be deserted. People shall decrease day by day until Qiyāmah takes place.

PURPOSE OF THE CREATION OF SCHOLARS

It is clear that the purpose of the creation of the universe was to gain cognisance of Allāh ﷻ and worship Him ﷻ. When the scholars shall not remain, who shall worship? When the universe will be empty of these two (cognizance and worship) and shall no longer remain for its purpose, it will be useless and worthy of ending. In consequence, it is apparent just how difficult it is for the religion to remain sound without knowledge; without it even the universe is futile. Therefore, losing this fortune is like losing the life of both worlds.

RISE FROM IGNORANCE!

O Muslims, for the sake of Allāh ﷻ, rise from the dreams of ignorance and pursue knowledge! For it is briskly leaving this world towards the hereafter. You remain occupied in worldly affairs day and night, turn your attention here too! You spend thousands on temporary luxuries, do spend some on eternal luxuries too, those that shall assist you there (hereafter) and shall protect you from calamities here. Later on you shall regret. You will try your utmost but will not be able to acquire this fortune.

THE EXCUSES OF SOME PEOPLE

“WE ARE POOR AND INDEBTED”

Now, if this statement is false then there is a major wrath. Assuming that the people accept it to be true, Allāh ﷻ will still know of its falsehood. On the other hand, if this is the reality, then how ungrateful is it to spend thousands on worldly affairs without any benefit and when it comes to the affairs of Allāh ﷻ, you worry about the outcome? If you truly feared debt then you would have removed all the signs of affluence and all signs of leadership (from yourself).

“WE SPEND ON “OTHER GOOD ACTS” WHATEVER WE CAN AFFORD”

So if possible then spend in this blessed act too. If not, then one should compare the two in terms of reward, whichever is greater he should adopt.

“THIS IS NOT OBLIGATORY. THE ONE WHOM ALLĀH GIVES THE OPPORTUNITY TO DO IT, HE SHOULD DO SO. AS FOR US, WE CANNOT EVEN DO THE OBLIGATORY ACTS PROPERLY”

Is it necessary that if someone does not fast, then he should not perform prayer too? These people should do the obligatory acts, as well as occupying themselves in the propagation of obligatory knowledge (knowledge of inheritance). If not a lot they should at least give an amount like that of zakāh to support knowledge, as zakāh is the debt owed to Allāh ﷻ and is obligatory upon them. If they do not pay their zakāh here, they shall face great calamities on the Day of Judgment.

Allāh ﷻ states in the Holy Qur’ān —

وَالَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ اللَّاهِبَ وَالْفُضَّةَ وَلَا يَتَّقُونَهَا
 فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَا يَشْرَهُمْ بَعَثَ إِلَيْهِمْ ﷻ يَوْمَ
 يَحْسَى عَائِبًا فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ فَمَتَّلَوْا بِهَا جِذَا هُمْ
 وَجَنُوبَهُمْ ﷻ وَظُهُورَهُمْ ﷻ هَذَا مَا كُنْتُمْ لَا تَفْقَهُونَ
 فَاذْكُرُوا مَا كُنْتُمْ يَكْتُمُونَ

and those who hoard up gold and silver and do not spend it in Allāh’s ﷻ way – so give them the glad tidings of a painful punishment. The day when it will be heated in the fire of Hell, and their foreheads and their sides and their backs will be branded with

them; “Here is what you hoarded for yourselves; so now taste the joy of your hoarding!” (Qur’ān: 9:34)

IS IT PERMISSIBLE FOR A WEALTHY STUDENT TO TAKE ZAKĀH?

One should know that it is permissible for a wealthy student to take zakāh if he does not have time to earn whilst seeking knowledge.

It is stated in Durr al-Mukhtār —

“From this proof it is strongly evident that which has been related to the occurrences, that it is permissible for a student of knowledge that he takes zakāh, even if he is rich, when he has freed himself up for the sole purpose of studying and teaching knowledge.

This is because he is unable to earn a livelihood and this is the only way possible. (The author has mentioned similarly).

Those who donate zakāh to Islamic institutions and express a preference for the donation to be given to those in greatest need are taking a sound precaution.

Allāh ﷻ knows best of the truth and to Him ﷻ is our return.

إِنَّهَا الْإِسْلَامُ وَالْعِلْمُ وَالْعَمَلُ

THE MERIT OF
Knowledge
& Scholars

Compiled by
Sayyid Muhammad Zargānī

A Sadr ul Ulama Academy Publication

PROMINENCE OF SCHOLARS

NEED FOR SCHOLARS IN PARADISE

It has been narrated on the authority of Hadirat Jābir رضي الله عنه that —

"Verily the people of Paradise shall be in need of the scholars in Paradise. This is because they will be blessed with the Vision of Allāh ﷻ every Jumū'ah. Then He ﷻ shall say to them "Wish for whatever you want." They shall then turn to the scholars (and ask "What shall we wish for") they (scholars) shall say "Wish for such and such a thing"³⁴

From this we see that not only are people in need of the scholars in this world, for guidance in their religious matters, but they will also be dependent on them in Paradise. It is also evident that those individuals who were honoured to be scholars in this world, their knowledge shall not be taken from them. Rather, they shall remain scholars, even in Paradise.

³⁴ *Hind, Alā al-Dīn, Kanz al-Ummal, Jordan, Bayt al-Akbar al-Darīfiyyah, 2014, Vol. 1, p. 1296*

THE MERIT OF KNOWLEDGE AND SCHOLARS

THE PRAYER OF A SCHOLAR AND A NON-SCHOLAR

It has been narrated on the authority of Hadhrat Muhammad ibn Ali عليه السلام that —

"Two units of prayer of a scholar are greater than seventy units of prayer of a non-scholar." ³⁵

From this we understand that once scholarship has been attained deeds immensely increase in reward. The status and the reward and the acceptance of the worship of a scholar is much greater in comparison to the ignorant.

A SCHOLAR IN BED AND SEVENTY YEARS OF WORSHIP

It has been narrated on the authority of Hadhrat Jābir عليه السلام that —

"One moment of a scholar seated in his bed contemplating on his knowledge is better than seventy years of worship of a worshipper." ³⁶

In this narration voluntary worship has been referred to. Knowledge despite which state it is acquired in is greater than worship.

³⁵ *Hindī, Mā al-Dīn, Kanz al-Ummāl, Jordan, Bayr al-Aḥkar al-Dawliyyah, 2014. Vol. 1 p. 197*

³⁶ *Hindī, Mā al-Dīn, Kanz al-Ummāl, Jordan, Bayr al-Aḥkar al-Dawliyyah, 2014. Vol. 1 p. 197*

THE DEATH OF A TRIBE COMPARED TO THE DEATH OF A SCHOLAR

It has been narrated on the authority of Hadhrat Abū Darda عليه السلام that —

"The death of a tribe is easier than the death of a scholar."

The loss which people will incur through the demise of one scholar is much weightier than that incurred through the death of a tribe. Someone may object "Labour, production and businesses shall suffer a greater loss through the death of a tribe than through the death of a scholar. So how can the above narration be true?" The answer to that would be, this is a comparison between the skill factor possessed by one scholar and that possessed by an entire tribe. The magnitude of religious knowledge which a scholar bears is not even borne by an entire tribe.

PRAYER BEHIND A SCHOLAR

It has been narrated on the authority of Hadhrat Abū Hurayrah عليه السلام that —

"The one who performs prayer behind a scholar from the scholars it is as though he performed prayer behind a Prophet from the Prophets." ³⁷

³⁷ *Ḥaḥī, Fihri al-Dīn, al-Tajīr al-Kabīr, Beirut, Dar Al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 2012. Vol. 1 p. 166*

From the above narration it is manifest that one of the major reasons for the loftiness of the Prophets ﷺ is their knowledge. The Prophets ﷺ are the most knowledgeable of the creation and undoubtedly, the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ is the greatest amongst them. The scholars possess a share of this knowledge and for this reason their virtue is likened with that of Prophets ﷺ.

THE SUCCESSORS OF THE PROPHETS

It has been narrated on the authority of Hadīrat Hasan ؓ that the Prophet ﷺ said —

"May the Mercy of Allāh ﷻ be upon my successors. It was said "O' Messenger of Allāh ﷺ who are your successors?" He ﷺ said "Those that love my Sunnah and reach it to the servants of Allāh ﷻ." 38

Again we see that the scholars are being praised in the prophetic narrations. Here they have been honoured with successorship of the Prophet ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ has also supplicated for them. Therefore, we see that all the great scholars of the past, present and future and all their work has been aided by the Dua of the Prophet ﷺ.

INTERCESSION ON THE DAY OF JUDGEMENT

It has been narrated on the authority of Hadīrat 'Uthmān ؓ that —

"The first to intercede on the Day of Judgement shall be the Prophets ﷺ, then the scholars then the martyrs." 39

The reason why scholars shall intercede before the martyrs is that the scholars are the deputies of the Prophets ﷺ and the martyrs are like their soldiers. It is also manifest that the struggle and hardships which a scholar faces in seeking knowledge and spreading it are far greater and more heroic than that of a soldier who fights in the battle field and sacrifices his life.

THE KEY TO PARADISE

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said —

"The scholars are the key to Paradise and the successors of the Prophets ﷺ." 40

Someone objected "A human cannot be a key." This means that the scholars have knowledge which is the key to Paradise. The proof of this is that if someone sees the keys of Paradise in his hands in a dream then the interpretation of this is that he shall be bestowed with knowledge.

38 *Kanz, Fakhr al-Din, al-Tajfir al-Kabir, Beirut, Dar Al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 2012. Vol. 1, p. 166*

39 *Ibnul, 'Uthmān, Kanz al-Ummal, Jordan, Bayr al-Akhar al-Dawliyyah, 2014. Vol. 1, p. 1296*

40 *Kanz, Fakhr al-Din, al-Tajfir al-Kabir, Beirut, Dar Al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 2012. Vol. 1, p. 175*

THE SLEEP OF A SCHOLAR

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said that —

"The sleep of a scholar is worship, his conversation is glorification, his breathing is charity and every drop from his eye extinguishes one ocean from hell."⁴¹

When we sleep our deeds temporarily terminate. However, when a scholar sleeps his deeds continue and he is rewarded. When we talk we talk about nonsense and useless matters. However, when a scholar talks his/her speech holds such a rank that it is classed as glorification. When we breathe, we want to live longer and longer in this world to attain its luxuries. However, when a scholar breathes he wishes to serve the religion upon every breath. When we shed tears it is either upon worldly loss or out of ostentation. However, when a scholar cries out of the fear of Allāh ﷻ and for the sake of the Ummah each droplet is shed with so much sincerity that it is capable of extinguishing one ocean of Hell.

⁴¹ Ruzi, *Fakhr al-Din, al-Tajisr al-Kabir*, Beirut, Dar Al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 2012. Vol. 1 p. 74.

THERE WILL BE NO FRIENDS OF ALLĀH ﷻ

Imām al-Azam Abu Hanifa and Imām Shāfi'ī ﷺ said —

"When the scholars shall not be the friends of Allāh ﷻ then there will be no friends of Allāh ﷻ."⁴²

This is regarding those scholars that act upon their knowledge. The message we receive from this is that it is necessary for a friend of Allāh ﷻ (Wali) to be a scholar. Without scholarship one can worship for his entire life but he will not gain the friendship of Allāh ﷻ. We also learn that to be a friend of Allāh ﷻ implementation is also necessary.

⁴² Saif, *Abdul-Habib* al-Saif, Beirut, Dar Al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 2014.

THE EXCELLENCE OF KNOWLEDGE

THE KEY TO KNOWLEDGE

It has been narrated on the authority of Hadrat 'Alī عليه السلام that —

"Knowledge is a treasure and the key to it is questioning. Therefore, question! May Allāh الله have mercy on you."⁴³

Just like every treasure has a key and can only be opened by it, Hadrat 'Alī عليه السلام informs us of the key of the treasure of knowledge. He says its key is questioning. If you do not question you shall not attain. Hence, in order to acquire knowledge it is incumbent upon one to question.

N.B. Questioning here only refers to those questions which hold relevance to the questioner. If otherwise, then we have been commanded to refrain from such questioning.

THE PATH TO PARADISE

It has been narrated on the authority of Hadrat ibn 'Umar عليه السلام that —

"For everything there is a path. The path to Paradise is knowledge."⁴⁴

In order to arrive at your destination you must be on the correct path, that path which in reality leads you to your desired destination. It is that path which in reality leads you to your desired destination. It is well known that not all paths are easy. Some are harder than others. Knowledge is a very difficult path to tread. You will face many diversions and many incidents on the way. But the joy and satisfaction you will receive once you reach the destination will force you to overlook any difficulties faced due to the magnitude of joy experienced at the destination (Paradise).

SUPERIORITY OF KNOWLEDGE OVER WEALTH IN SEVEN WAYS

Hadrat 'Alī عليه السلام said —

"Knowledge is greater than wealth in seven ways.

1. Knowledge is the inheritance of the Prophets عليهم السلام; wealth is the inheritance of the people of Fir'aawn.
2. Knowledge does not decrease by spending (teaching); wealth decreases.
3. Wealth requires a protector; knowledge protects its bearer.
4. When a man dies his wealth remains; knowledge enters the grave with its bearer.

⁴³ *Hindah, Nala al-Din, Kanz al-Ummal, Jordan, Bayr al-Akhar al-Dawliyyah, 2014, Vol. 1 p. 193*

⁴⁴ *Hindah, Nala al-Din, Kanz al-Ummal, Jordan, Bayr al-Akhar al-Dawliyyah, 2014, Vol. 1 p. 197*

5. Wealth is attained by believers and disbelievers; knowledge is not attained but by believers.
6. Everyone is in need of the people of knowledge in their religious matters; they are not in need of wealthy people.
7. Knowledge strengthens the one walking upon the bridge; wealth prevents one.⁴⁵

It is clear that the inheritance of the Prophets ~~is~~ is greater than that of the people of Fir'awn. It is for us to decide whom we wish to inherit from.

When you use knowledge, (i.e. teach, propagate or implement) it only increases. As opposed to wealth, it decreases as you spend. It can be argued that when one invests in a business at first wealth decreases, however, it then increases. So in this sense, wealth is greater than knowledge. The answer to this would be that the increase after the decrease in wealth is not certain. In many cases it decreases and only leads to further decrease. As for knowledge when used there is no decrease and for this reason knowledge is greater.

It is well known that once any asset comes into one's possession, it will require a protector. E.g. when a house is purchased items such as CCTV, locks and guards are required to protect that property. Similar is the case of wealth; banks, lockers and various other places. If it is not in a secure place like there is a high chance of loss. However the case is much contrary to this. Knowledge does not require a protector. Rather once someone becomes a possessor of knowledge, it is knowledge that protects the person. Knowledge will allow him to distinguish between right and wrong. Hence, will protect him from wrong. As for those who have wealth and no knowledge then in most cases this leads them to the greatest of sins such as; not paying zakāh (due to greed), taking interest and unlawful/unnecessary spending which then leads to arrogance and ostentation.

All worldly assets shall abandon you when the appointed time arrives. In such a time, knowledge will be the one to accompany you to the grave. It will be a means of support, guidance and light. Wealth shall benefit a person only in a select few circumstances after death. However, knowledge will be a cause of constant increase in reward. As the propagated knowledge spreads, the deceased will be rewarded. Harding and having large amounts of wealth shall not distinguish one from the disbelievers. This is something possessed by both parties. On the contrary, knowledge is that resource which is only possessed by the believers. One may object "The disbelievers possess knowledge too. They have made numerous scientific discoveries and enhancements, which all require knowledge."

⁴⁵ Razi, *Faḥm al-Dīn, al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr, Beḥar, Dar Al-Koob al-Ilmiyyah, 2012, Vol. 1 p. 168*

The answer would be knowledge here refers to that knowledge which is not only prosperous in this world but in the hereafter also. This is religious knowledge.

Every faculty of life requires knowledge. As for religious matters, it is such a faculty which relies and is dependent on religious knowledge. It does not depend on wealth. Although, wealth, if processed correctly, then it is capable of boosting the means of gaining knowledge of religious matters.

Knowledge acts like a substructure for its bearer on the bridge, in like it supports its bearer in the grave. On the other hand, wealth due to the many sins accumulated through it (i.e. spending it unlawfully) will prevent one and act as an obstacle on the bridge for its possessor.

THE DEAD HEART

Imām Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī رحمته writes —

⁴⁶ "The heart is dead and its revival is with knowledge."

Just as a body without a soul is dead. Similarly, a heart without knowledge is dead. The only way to revive the heart is by filling it with the light of knowledge.

⁴⁶ Razi, *Fakhr al-Din, al-Rāzī al-Kabir, Beirut, Dar Al-Kotob al-Ilmiyyah, 2012, Vol. 1, p. 98*

SEEKING KNOWLEDGE AND ITS VIRTUES

TWO DESIROUS PEOPLE

It has been narrated on the authority of Hadrat Anas رضي الله عنه that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said —

"Two desirous people cannot be satiated. One desirous of knowledge cannot be satiated from it and one desirous of the world cannot be satiated with it."⁴⁷

In the above narration two types of people have been mentioned. One who is desirous of knowledge and one who is desirous of the world. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said with regards to both that these people cannot be satiated. They cannot suffice with what they have. They will always want more. The former is praiseworthy. The latter is blameworthy. The former will raise you and the latter will decrease you and destroy you.

Shaykh 'Abdul al-Haq al-Muhadith al-Delhawī رحمته writes —

"The more knowledge you gain the more thirsty you become (for it)."

The above statement again emphasizes the fact that those thirsty and desirous of knowledge can never be satiated. More knowledge will only lead to a desire for more.

⁴⁷ *Ibnul, 'Abd al-Din, Khat al-Ummal, Jordan, Bayr al-Akbar al-Dawliyyah, 2014, Vol. 1, p. 1902*

KNOWLEDGE IS FAITH

Imām ibn Sīrīn رضي الله عنه said —

"Verily this knowledge is faith. So beware from whom you take your faith."⁴⁸

Do not seek knowledge of the Qur'an and Hadith from misguided and worldly people as this will create misguidance and love for the world within your hearts. Do not listen to the speeches of the world as their misguidance will verily have an effect. For this reason it is haram to listen to the speeches of misguided people. Many struggle to understand the importance of this concept. They believe we are all Muslims so it does not matter who we learn from and listen to. This statement possesses no basis. Only an ignorant would have such perspectives. As a parent, when looking for a school for our children we look for the best. Why do we do that? We do that because although the same content is taught universally, each school is different. Each school will have a contrastive effect on our children. Some good and some bad. For this reason we look for the best. When we can do this for worldly knowledge then why can we not do so for religious knowledge? This indicates towards a lack of interest and concern. If we wish to rise once again, we must focus on the foundation. The foundation is knowledge. Also, in current times we see that many of our fellow Muslims have distanced themselves from scholars and have made social media their primary source of knowledge. In many cases we do not even know who it is that is informing us. We blindly follow.

⁴⁸ Tabrizi, *Wah al-Din, Mishkat al-Masabih, Beirut, Dar Al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah*, 2012, Vol. 1, p. 70

This is exactly what we have been warned against. This can be solved in two ways, either we stop taking knowledge from social media or we verily every piece of knowledge with a person of authority.

THE DEATH OF A STUDENT OF KNOWLEDGE

It has been narrated on the authority of Hadrat Abū Dhar رضي الله عنه and Hadrat Abū Hurayrah رضي الله عنه that —

"When death comes to a student of knowledge and he is in that state (studying knowledge) then he dies as a martyr."⁴⁹

This announces the lofty status of the students of knowledge. Studying knowledge is a struggle. The struggle which students/scholars face is much greater than that which soldiers face. Hence, they are rewarded accordingly.

REGRET ON THE DAY OF JUDGEMENT

It has been narrated on the authority of Hadrat Anas رضي الله عنه —

"The one in the greatest regret on the Day of Judgement is a man who had the opportunity to study knowledge in the world but he did not."⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Hadrat Abū Dhar, *Kanz al-Ummal, Jordan, Bayr al-Ahwar al-Damashqiyyah*, 2014, Vol. 1, p. 1294

What more does a person require to be awaken? Scholarship is not for everyone. Yet the basics (Fard 'Ayn) everyone must seek. Without this one is unable to undertake his duties. If we wish to become an accountant we will study maths. If we wish to become a doctor we will study science. If we wish to become a lawyer we will study law. If we can do this for worldly desires, why can we not study religious knowledge in order to become a proper Muslim? Not just one by name

RESPONSIBILITY OF SUSTENANCE

It has been narrated on the authority of Hadrat Zayd ibn Hāritha رضي الله عنه

"The one who seeks knowledge Allāh ﷻ has taken his sustenance in His ﷻ responsibility."⁵¹

Then why do we constantly worry about income? Allāh ﷻ has made our sustenance His ﷻ responsibility, so we need not to have any concern regarding it. We need to study, implement and propagate sustenance will come. As for those individuals who do not have belief in this Divine Law then they should know that sustenance does not come from anyone but Allāh ﷻ. If He ﷻ wishes He ﷻ will provide if not He ﷻ will not, despite the number of degrees one possesses. Do we not see many out there with degrees but no job? These are all signs telling us that ultimately Allāh ﷻ provides sustenance. Someone may argue "Not only do we see graduates without jobs, we also see scholars and students of religious knowledge without a means of income. How then can the above statement possibly be true?"

the answer would be those that have been placed in difficulty in terms of finance then this is another test from the Almighty. Many pass the trials put forward whilst seeking knowledge, however, later on they fail the test when put in trial with means of income. Those that pass both tests hold a very lofty rank and will be rewarded immensely.

THE LIVING AMONGST THE DEAD

It has been narrated on the authority of Hadrat Hasan ibn Abū Sinān رضي الله عنه

"A student of knowledge between ignorant people is like a living being amongst the dead."⁵²

Without knowledge it is as though one is not even alive. As mentioned before, revival is with knowledge. So, for all those who wish to revive themselves and step out of the darkness's of ignorance it is incumbent upon them to remove all obstacles between knowledge and them. All that is required is a try. Thereafter, Allāh ﷻ takes you to your destination.

⁵¹ *Minah, Mā al-Dīn, Kamz al-Ummal, Jordan, Bayr al-Akhar al-Dawliyyah, 2014, Vol. 1 p. 1294*

⁵² *Minah, Mā al-Dīn, Kamz al-Ummal, Jordan, Bayr al-Akhar al-Dawliyyah, 2014, Vol. 1 p. 1285*

BETTER THAN A THOUSAND UNITS OF SUPEREROGATORY
ACCEPTED PRAYER

It has been narrated on the authority of Hadrat Abū Dharr رضي الله عنه —

"Studying a portion of knowledge is better for you than performing a thousand units of supererogatory, accepted prayer." ⁵³

It is commonly held between the public that prayer is one of the fastest and most effective forms of worship. For this reason a lot of people perform supererogatory acts of prayer on the blessed nights such as the Night of Miraj, the Night of Salvation and the Night of Power. If only they would ponder upon this narration. Spending the equivalent amount of time in seeking knowledge is far more beneficial than spending that time in supererogatory prayer. One must bear in mind that a thousand units of **accepted** prayers have been referred to in the above narration. One may ask why is this of importance? The answer would be we see nowadays seldom do people perform their prayers those that do perform their prayers seldom do they perform them correctly. It is manifest that if prayer is not performed correctly then it is nothing more than a few minutes of exercise. We should all take a moment to contemplate on our prayers. Are we giving our prayers their due right? If not, we need to awaken, and seek knowledge in order to undertake our duties properly before it is too late. For this reason one portion of knowledge being more virtuous than a thousand units of **accepted** prayer is a vital factor.

⁵³ *Thiqah, Mata al-Din, Kanz al-Ummal, Jordan, Bayt al-Akbar al-Dawliyyah, 2014, Vol. 1 p. 289*

FREEDOM FROM HELL

It has been narrated on the authority of Hadrat Anas رضي الله عنه that the

prophet ﷺ said —

"The one who wishes to see those freed by Allāh ﷻ from Hell then he should look at the students of knowledge. By the one in whose control is my life, there is no student of knowledge who frequents his visit to the door of a scholar but, Allāh ﷻ writes for him the worship of a year for each step and builds him the worship of a year for each step. He (student) walks on the earth whilst the earth seeks forgiveness for him. He spends his evening and day whilst he is being forgiven. The Angels testify for them (students of knowledge) that they have been freed from Hell by Allāh ﷻ." ⁵⁴

Allāhu Akbar! Can a student of knowledge ask for any more? By Allāh ﷻ if this is the status of a student, someone who is not yet a qualified scholar, then how lofty must the status of a qualified scholar be? Such reward is just for the journeying done by the student, what must be the reward of the actual study? Even the earth is honoured to have a student walk upon it. For this reason it seeks forgiveness on his behalf.

⁵⁴ *Khat, Fakh al-Din, al-Tajisir al-Kabir, Beirut, Dar Al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 2012, Vol. 1 p. 165*

THE BODY OF A STUDENT IS FORBIDDEN FOR THE FIRST
 Messenger of Allah ﷺ said —

"Whosoever's feet become dusty in search of knowledge Allah ﷻ makes his body forbidden for the fire and His ﷻ Angels seek forgiveness for him. If he dies in its search he dies a martyr and his grave is a garden from the gardens of Paradise. His grave is expanded the extent of his sight and is enlightened upon his neighbours, forty graves to his right, forty graves to his left, forty graves behind him and forty graves in front of him,"⁵⁵

Reference to one's feet becoming dusty is an expression. It refers to strife. Knowledge requires strife. A famous couplet reads "مَنْ سَلَكَ سَبِيلَ الْعِلْمِ حَتَّى يَمُوتَ مِنْهُ رَجُلٌ يَمُوتُ مَرْتِدًا" "Whosoever strives shall gain". One should not think that if he is unable to complete his studies then his efforts are futile. Rather he should know that if that is the case then he shall die a martyr. Not only does Allāh ﷻ raise the ranks of a scholar/student in the world and distinguishes them from others, but He ﷻ also does so in the grave. The grave of a student will be enlightened so that his neighbours are aware that this grave does not belong to an ordinary person, but in fact this grave is of a student of knowledge.

⁵⁵ Razi, *Fakhr al-Din, al-Tajisr al-Kabir, Beirut, Dar Al-Koob al-Ilmiyyah, 2012, Vol. 1 p. 174*

SEEKING KNOWLEDGE FOR SIX BENEFITS

Imam Fakhr al-Din al-Rāzī ﷺ writes —

"A believer seeks knowledge for six benefits.

1. Allāh ﷻ has ordered me to fulfil obligatory acts of worship; I am not able to fulfil them without knowledge.
2. Allāh ﷻ has commanded me to refrain from sin; I am unable to abstain from them without knowledge.
3. Allāh ﷻ has made gratitude upon his favours necessary; I cannot show gratefulness without knowledge.
4. Allāh ﷻ has decreed justice with the creation upon me; I cannot be just without knowledge.
5. Allāh ﷻ has ordained that I be patient upon the affliction of a calamity; I am incapable of being patient without knowledge.
6. Allāh ﷻ has instructed me to have enmity with Satan; I cannot have enmity with him without knowledge."⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Razi, *Fakhr al-Din, al-Tajisr al-Kabir, Beirut, Dar Al-Koob al-Ilmiyyah, 2012, Vol. 1 p. 169-70*

Firstly, it should be understood that when you are capable of performing prayer then it becomes obligatory upon you. When you are capable of observing the fasts of Ramadān then they become obligatory upon you. When you are capable of donating a share of your wealth to the needy then it becomes obligatory upon you. When you are capable of performing pilgrimage then it becomes obligatory upon you. Now the above have become obligatory, knowledge of how to undertake each is also obligatory. Each form of worship has a certain method and specific conditions which must be met in order to correctly perform it. If one is unaware and heedless of these then he will commit an act unknowingly that are a means of invalidation. Once any worship has been ruled invalid it becomes necessary to repeat it. Therefore we understand how vital it is for us to acknowledge and learn the correct method of worship.

Next, it is recognized and established, even amongst the laypeople, that we have been ordered to refrain from sin. It is also established that classification of good and bad is not in our hands. Rather this is by Divine ordainment. Therefore, if one is oblivious of the Divine Commandments then how is he going to distinguish between right and wrong? Ignorance and illiterateness incapacitates one from doing so. Consequently, it is mandatory for us to seek knowledge of right and wrong so that we can implement the good and abstain from the bad.

Thereafter, we must note that expressing gratitude upon the bounties of Allāh ﷻ is elementary upon us. We cannot do so without prior knowledge of the method of gratification and knowledge of those affairs which are contradictory to it. We can understand this concept using a practice which is very common amongst ourselves. We have a

father, he does not perform five times prayer. He has been longing for a child for several years. Then one day he makes a sincere supplication in the court of Allāh ﷻ. Soon he is blessed with a child. Out of joy this father donates X amount of money to charity assuming that this is expressing gratitude for the blessing which he has received. However, this is not the case. If only this father were to know that true gratitude is in being obedient and obeying the commandments of His Lord. Such gratification holds no status. As long his actions are contradictory to his gratitude, he will not gain the true essence of gratitude. Thereupon, we realise that knowledge is required even to express gratitude to Allāh ﷻ.

Following gratitude it is also essential upon us to exercise justice amongst the people. Allāh ﷻ is the Most Just and He ﷻ has ordained for us to exercise justice also. Everyone has their own perception of justice. Some would say the forbiddance of alcohol is cruelty and injustice. On the other hand some would say its forbiddance is a form of justice. Now, an ignorant person would be left in a dilemma. As for someone with knowledge he would immediately say that its criminalisation is just and upright as stated in the Holy Qur'ān. Just to briefly mention why it is upright, we see that when someone is intoxicated not only does he place his life in danger, but he also places the life of others in danger too e.g. drink driving. It is a basic and foundational principle in Islam that "If a large quantity of something is impermissible then even a small quantity is impermissible". Now it is for you to decide whether its forbiddance is cruelty or its permissibility would be cruelty. In consequence, it is manifest that even to exercise justice correctly one is in need of knowledge.

We all know how hard it is to remain patient upon the affliction of a calamity. In that state people lose control and some even result to making statements which are contradictory to belief. Thereby taking themselves out of the folds of Islam. Taking in account that such incidents do take place we should understand that knowledge is a must, even for situations like this. If one possess knowledge of how to deal with such situations and is aware of the reward that such people gain for persevering then surely this will repress and refrain them.

Finally, this is to do with our nemesis, Satan. Enmity with him is a Divine decree. Just as knowledge is required in expressing gratitude, so that one may do so correctly, it is also mandatory for expressing enmity with Satan. If one is to go by his own intellect then he may even resort to swearing at Satan, in order to express enmity. We all know that this is not the case and that this is not the way of expression. Hence, we need knowledge by which we can understand how to express enmity. The knowledgeable will be aware that the greatest way to express enmity with Satan is to do good deeds. Do everything which he attempts to prevent you from and refrain from everything he incites you towards. This is the way of expression. "Prevent people from seeking knowledge" is at the top of his to-do list. For this reason he rejoices immensely upon the news of prevention from it.

A STUDENT OF KNOWLEDGE AND HIS INTENTIONS

COMPETITION WITH SCHOLARS

It has been narrated on the authority of Hadhrat Kab ibn Mālik رضي الله عنه that the Prophet ﷺ said —

"The one who seeks knowledge to compete with scholars or to argue with the ignorant or that he turns people's faces towards himself Allāh ﷻ shall enter him in Hell."⁵⁷

Now, despite all the excellences stated of seeking knowledge, just like all things, if knowledge is sought with an indecent and blameworthy intention then even this will lead you to the Hell fire. As mentioned above, those that seek knowledge to compete and show off to other scholars then all the hardships and trials one goes through will be futile and of no use. The only outcome with such an intention is Hell fire. Similar is the case of the one who seeks knowledge to argue and quarrel with the ignorant. Quarrelling with the ignorant is not only a misapplication and a fruitless use of time rather in majority of the cases it leads to the ignorant person making inappropriate and unjustifiable comments. The final intention stated is to seek knowledge ostentatiously. It is apparent that ostentation is not a commendable intention to have. There are many more unacceptable intentions which one can make to seek knowledge. The result of all of them will be Hell.

⁵⁷ Tabari, *Wahid al-Din, Mishkat al-Masabih, Beirut, Dar Al-Kotob al-Ilmiyyah, 2012*, Vol. 1, p. 63

REVIVE ISLAM

It has been narrated on the authority of Hadhrat Hasan al-Basri ؓ that the Prophet ﷺ said —

“The one whom death approaches whilst he is seeking knowledge so that he can revive Islam with it then between him and the Prophets ﷺ there will be one level in Paradise.”⁵⁸

In the above narration the Prophet ﷺ mentions the key and pivotal intention which every student of the sacred knowledge should have. That is to revive Islam. The rank of this intention is such that if one dies with this intention then between him and the Prophets ﷺ there will only be one rank. Closeness to the Prophets ﷺ means closeness to the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ and closeness with the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ indicates closeness with Allāh ﷻ. From this we understand that this student of knowledge has not yet attempted to revive Islam, but still he will be rewarded immensely, which shows us that actions are indeed based on intentions.

⁵⁸ Tabrizi, *Wali al-Din, Mishkat al-Masabih, Beirut, Dar Al-Kotob al-Ilmiyyah, 2012, Vol. 1 p. 67*

REFUTATION OF FALSEHOOD AND MISGUIDANCE

It has been narrated on the authority of Hadhrat ibn Mas'ūd ؓ that the prophet ﷺ said —

“The one who seeks a portion of knowledge so that he may refute falsehood for the truth or misguidance for guidance then this is like forty years of worship of a worshipper.”⁵⁹

Again, another very praiseworthy intention has been stated which is to refute falsehood and misguidance. The refutation of these is vital for a healthy growth of the Muslim community. Once falsehood and misguidance has been deterred then this will open the doors to love and peace amongst the Muslims. Only then can we work together for the better. We need to eradicate falsehood and unite. How are we supposed to accelerate with there being separation not only between different families of a community, but even within families? Once falsehood and misguidance have been eradicated then this will give us a start to a new beginning. This will be like revival from the foundations. For this reason this intention holds so much weight.

⁵⁹ Ibrah, *Ala al-Din, Kanz al-Ummal, Jordan, Bayr al-Afkar al-Dawliyyah, 2014, Vol. 1 p. 1298*

THE REWARD OF THE NUMBER OF SAND PARTICLES ON
A MOUNTAIN

It has been narrated on the authority of Hadrat Anas رضي الله عنه that the Prophet ﷺ said —

“The one who seeks a portion of knowledge so that he may rectify himself or those after him, Allāh ﷻ writes for him reward of the number of sand particles on a mountain.”⁶⁰

Rectification is a very notable intention for seeking knowledge. We receive a great lesson from this narration. A lesson which every single person should understand and implement. Why did the Prophet ﷺ state the intention of rectifying one's self before the intention of rectifying others? The wisdom behind this is that one should always look towards himself first when pointing out flaws. Every individual must acknowledge his own state first. He must rectify his state before he attempts to rectify others'. This concept is clear. If one is preaching about prayer and isn't performing his own prayers then what hope does he have? To bring change one must be the change. We must change ourselves before trying to change a whole community. If everyone has this mind-set then why will the state of the Muslims not change? Indeed it will.

GOLD EQUIVALENT TO THE SIZE OF MOUNT ABŪ QUBAYS

It has been narrated on the authority of Hadrat Anas رضي الله عنه that the prophet ﷺ said —

“The one who seeks knowledge for the pleasure of Allāh ﷻ then he is like the one who fasts during the day and worships during the night. Verily a portion of knowledge which a man studies is better for him than having gold the amount of Mount Abū Qubays which he then spends in the way of Allāh ﷻ.”⁶¹

Seeking the pleasure of Allāh ﷻ in every act of worship is a must. This is because if any form of worship is performed to please others then this will be a minor form of shirk. May Allāh ﷻ Forbid! If worship is done to please others then their pleasure will last a while and then it will end. It is Allāh ﷻ that shall never end and is the Ever-Living. Makkah al-Mukarramah is situated between Mount Abū Qubays and Mount Qūayqīān. Even if someone were to donate gold the amount of Mount Abū Qubays it will not be equivalent to studying a portion of knowledge.

SEEKING KNOWLEDGE FOR OTHER THAN ALLĀH

It has been narrated on the authority of Hadrat ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنهما that the Prophet ﷺ said —

"The one who studies knowledge for other than Allāh ﷻ then he should make his abode in Hell!" ⁶²

Seeking knowledge for anyone other than Allāh ﷻ leads only to Hell.

SEEKING KNOWLEDGE TO BOAST

It has been narrated on the authority of Hadrat Umm Salama رضي الله عنها that the Prophet ﷺ said —

"The one who seeks knowledge to boast about it with people then he is in Hell!" ⁶³

This is because his intention is not to please Allāh ﷻ rather it is to impress others.

KNOWLEDGE WITHOUT IMPLEMENTATION

It has been narrated on the authority of Hadrat ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه that the prophet ﷺ said —

"The one who seeks knowledge without implementation then he is like the one who mocks his Lord." ⁶⁴

Seeking knowledge involves understanding the commandments of Allāh ﷻ and those affairs which He ﷻ has prohibited. Now the one who has sought knowledge has fully understood what is right and what is wrong. Thereafter, if he is to act against what he has studied, it is as though he is mocking Allāh ﷻ. He knows Allāh ﷻ has commanded him to perform five daily prayers, but he still chooses to neglect them. He knows Allāh ﷻ has ordered him to honour his parents, but he still chooses to dishonour them. He knows that Allāh ﷻ has ordained for him one pilgrimage in his lifetime, if he is able, but he still chooses to disregard it. Now, if this is not mockery then what is mockery?

⁶² *Hindi, Ma al-Din, Kanz al-Ummal, Jordan, Bayr al-Akhar al-Darilayyah, 2014, Vol. 1 p. 1193*

⁶³ *Hindi, Ma al-Din, Kanz al-Ummal, Jordan, Bayr al-Akhar al-Darilayyah, 2014, Vol. 1 p. 956*

⁶⁴ *Hindi, Ma al-Din, Kanz al-Ummal, Jordan, Bayr al-Akhar al-Darilayyah, 2014, Vol. 1 p. 906*

FORTY INTENTIONS FOR SEEKING KNOWLEDGE

1. Teach others 2. Rectify myself 3. Guide others 4. Please Allāh
5. Please the Prophet ﷺ 6. Gain reward 7. Spread the teachings of the Prophet ﷺ 8. Gain closeness to Allāh ﷻ 9. Acquire the company of the pious 10. Revive Islam 11. Save myself from Hell 12. Save others from Hell 13. Serve the religion 14. Revive the teachings of the predecessors 15. Serve the community 16. Displease Satan 17. Control my Nafs 18. Gain cognisance of Allāh ﷻ 19. Act upon the teachings of our predecessors 20. Invite people towards Islam 21. Answer those who question 22. Express Gratitude 23. Express love for Allāh ﷻ 24. Express love for the Prophet ﷺ 25. Receive prayers from people 26. Incite others towards seeking knowledge 27. Increase the number of scholars 28. Refute falsehood and misguidance 29. Stop people from unlawful practices 30. Encourage the rightful 31. Reprimand the sinful 32. Answer any objections on Islam 33. Elevate the flag of Islam 34. Please your parents 35. Learn the rights of a marital partner to implement them 36. Learn the rights of a neighbour to implement them 37. Translate Islamic literature 38. Author Islamic books 39. Deliver lectures to the public 40. Lead prayer.

EMINENCE OF JURISPRUDENCE AND JURISTS

MORE SEVERE THAN A THOUSAND WORSHIPPERS

It has been narrated on the authority of Hadrat ibn 'Abbās ؓ that the prophet ﷺ said —

"One faqih (jurist) is more severe on Satan than a thousand worshippers." ⁶⁵

Satan greatly struggles to misguide a jurist due to his knowledge. A jurist is able to combat Satan and his comrades as opposed to worshippers. The capacitating factor here is none other than knowledge.

SUSTENANCE FROM WHERE YOU CAN NOT IMAGINE

It has been narrated on the authority of Hadrat 'Abdullah ibn Juz al-Zahid ؓ that the Prophet ﷺ said —

"The one who becomes a faqih of the religion of Allāh ﷻ, Allāh ﷻ shall be sufficient for him in his sorrows and his sustenance, from where he cannot even imagine." ⁶⁶

When a student of knowledge faces trials and tribulations in seeking knowledge then will Allāh ﷻ not grant him anything in return? Surely he will. Allāh ﷻ is so pleased with such people that he takes their

⁶⁵ Bukhārī, *Muḥammad, Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Cairo, Dar al-Hadith, 2004, Vol. 1, p. 54

⁶⁶ Hindu, *Ma al-Din, Kanz al-Ummal*, Jordan, Bayr al-Afkar al-Dawliyyah, 2014, Vol. 1, p. 1299

sorrows/problems and their sustenance upon Himself ﷺ. He ﷺ then provides for them from where one cannot even imagine.

NO WORSHIP WITHOUT JURISPRUDENCE

It has been narrated on the authority of Hadrat ibn 'Umar ؓ that the Prophet ﷺ said —

"There is no worship without jurisprudence. One gathering of jurisprudence is better than the worship of seventy years."

Why is there no worship without jurisprudence? The reason is that jurisprudence is the science in which the method of prayer, the conditions and the nullifying factors etc. are discussed. For this reason, in order to perform prayer correctly one must be aware of its jurisprudential rulings. Without its awareness one will unescapably make invalidating mistakes. Even one nullifying/invalidating factor is enough to invalidate prayer. Hence, we understand how important it is to fully acknowledge the jurisprudence of prayer. This is not limited to only prayer, rather all forms of worship are alike in terms of the conditioning of jurisprudential understanding. Worship empty of this is as though there is no worship. We need to reform the state of our gatherings. Majority of our gatherings should and must be knowledge based if we wish to bring change. Without knowledge people are dead and revival is only through knowledge, as emphasized previously.

THE ONE WHO BUILDS DURING THE NIGHT AND DESTOYS DURING THE DAY

It has been narrated on the authority of Hadrat Aisha ؓ that the prophet ﷺ said —

"The like of a worshipper who does not know jurisprudence is like the one who builds during the night and destroys during the day."⁶⁷

All the efforts go to waste due to a lack of knowledge. Therefore, if we wish for our prayers to be accepted we must acquire a sufficient amount of knowledge prior to engaging in worship. We must at least know of the obligatory knowledge. Such a time has come that very few are aware of the obligatory knowledge. The few that are they are now classed as scholars. Someone may object "This way of expression usually reads such and such a person does this during the day however he does something contrary to that during the night. Thereby bringing his efforts to a waste. So why is it the opposite in the above narration?" The answer to that is unlike other things (supererogatory) worship is something which people naturally do at night, in the peace of their own homes. For this reason the Prophet ﷺ said they will destroy what they had built during the night i.e. the worship.

⁶⁷ *Ibnul-Hakam, Ma'ad al-Idn, Kanz al-Ummal, Jordan, Bayr al-Ahkar al-Dawliyyah, 2004, Vol. 1 p. 1902*

BENEFIT OF THE COMPANY OF SCHOLARS

SITTING WITH THE SCHOLARS

It has been narrated on the authority of Hadrat ibn 'Abbās ؓ that—

"Sitting with the scholars is worship." ⁶⁸

Scholars have been blessed by Allāh ﷻ so much that their company is classed as worship.

N.B. Sitting with the intention of learning has not been mentioned. This shows that merely the sitting holds such a rank. Intention of learning will be a bonus.

MEETING THE PROPHET ﷺ

It has been narrated on the authority of Hadrat Bahz ibn Hakim ؓ that the Prophet ﷺ said —

"The one who meets a scholar, verily he has met me.

The one who visits a scholar, verily he has visited me.

The one who sits with the scholars, verily he has sat with me and the one who has sat with me, verily he

has sat with My Lord." ⁶⁹

⁶⁸ *Hind, Ala al-Din, Kanz al-Ummal, Jordan, Bayr al-Akhar al-Dawliyyah, 2014, Vol. 1, p. 1296*

⁶⁹ *Hind, Ala al-Din, Kanz al-Ummal, Jordan, Bayr al-Akhar al-Dawliyyah, 2014, Vol. 1, p. 1300*

Only the scholars have been granted such a status. The reason for this is that the scholars are the inheritors of the Prophet ﷺ. Undoubtedly, sitting with Allāh ﷻ isn't referred to physically. Rather, this refers to immense closeness.

BETTER THAN THE WORSHIP OF ONE YEAR

It has been narrated on the authority of Hadrat Abū Hurayrah ؓ that —

"Listening to one word of religious knowledge is better for one than the worship of a year and sitting for one moment in a discourse of knowledge is better than freeing a slave." ⁷⁰

We do not admire listening to the knowledgeable nor do we admire speaking to the knowledgeable. Our conversations consist of backbiting, slander and swearing. So how are we ever going to gain such reward through our conversations?

⁷⁰ *Hind, Ala al-Din, Kanz al-Ummal, Jordan, Bayr al-Akhar al-Dawliyyah, 2014, Vol. 1, p. 1301*

THE SCHOLAR WHO DETERS FROM FIVE AND CALLS
TOWARDS FIVE

Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī رحمته الله writes that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said –

"Accompany the scholar who deters from five things and calls towards five.

1. Deters from the desire of the world and calls towards asceticism.
2. Deters from ostentation and calls towards sincerity.
3. Deters from arrogance and calls towards humbleness.
4. Deters from laziness and calls towards advising.
5. Deters from ignorance and calls towards knowledge.

It is obvious that the scholar who calls towards love of the world can never call towards asceticism rightfully. For this reason we should distance ourselves from such scholars.

As for a scholar who is ostentatious then his knowledge shall not benefit him. Separation from such scholars is necessary.

Despite possessing knowledge of all the harms of arrogance, if a scholar still does not resist then he is leading his way to the Hellfire along with all those that follow him in his traits. We need our scholars to be humble, not arrogant.

If scholars are going to be lazy then who do we expect to undertake the work of the Din? It is only he who is capable of serving the Din. If he lacks then there will be a lack in the religion. For this reason we should distance ourselves from such scholars. Those individuals who are able to change such a scholar they should try.

Scholars are the ones who stand for knowledge. Looking at a scholar reminds you of knowledge and creates a desire in one's heart for seeking knowledge. Now, if the scholar himself speaks and acts against what he claims to stand for then this will ironically deter people from knowledge.

Overall, we understand that not all scholars are worthy of being followed for the purpose of absolute religious guidance. There will be some which we should refrain from. One must be cautious as to where one takes guidance and instructions from. If there are evil traits manifest upon the so-called scholar, such as those who are mentioned here then one must be cautious at the very least and may ultimately have to leave the company of such a person immediately.

THE EXCELLENCE OF TEACHING AND WRITING
THE IMMENSE REWARDS GRANTED TO THE TEACHER
OF KNOWLEDGE

It has been narrated on the authority of Hadhrat Mu'ādh ibn Anas رضي الله عنه that —

"The teacher of knowledge gains the reward of every individual who acts upon the knowledge, without any deduction from the doer."⁷¹

One may be forgiven for assuming that learning sacred knowledge is the greatest form of worship we are able to engage in. However, we see that teaching and propagating knowledge after seeking it holds a much loftier rank. The one who preaches, not only is he rewarded for preaching but he also gets the reward of every single person who acted upon that piece of knowledge. This is without any deduction from the reward gained by the implementor. For example, if one receives hundred rewards for sending salutations upon the Messenger ﷺ and twenty do so. Then the preacher will receive his own reward plus two thousand whilst each person still receives his hundred rewards. From this we understand that indeed there is no scarcity in the treasures of Allah ﷻ. Undoubtedly, he is the Most Merciful.

⁷¹ *Hind, Ala al-Din, Kanz al-Ummal, Jordan, Bayr al-Akhar al-Dawliyyah, 2014, Vol. 1, p. 1294*

A SCHOLAR IS BETTER THAN A THOUSAND WORSHIPPERS

It has been narrated on the authority of Hadhrat 'Alī رضي الله عنه that —

"A scholar from whom benefit is taken is better than a thousand worshippers."⁷²

Worshipper refers to those whose worship is accepted. This is because worship is only of benefit once accepted. The wisdom behind the above narration is that a worshipper only benefits himself through his worship. On the other hand, a scholar benefits himself, saves himself from the Hellfire, as well as saving others. As for the worshipper whose worship is not accepted then he does not benefit himself nor does he benefit others.

THE BEST FORM OF CHARITY

It has been narrated on the authority of Hadhrat Samurah رضي الله عنه that —

"People do not give charity better than (charity towards) spreading knowledge."⁷³

Someone may object "Why is giving charity towards spreading knowledge better? There are people dying from hunger, thirst and a lack of shelter in the world. This should be a greater form of charity."

⁷² *Hind, Ala al-Din, Kanz al-Ummal, Jordan, Bayr al-Akhar al-Dawliyyah, 2014, Vol. 1, p. 1295*

⁷³ *Hind, Ala al-Din, Kanz al-Ummal, Jordan, Bayr al-Akhar al-Dawliyyah, 2014, Vol. 1, p. 1297*

The answer would be that it is known, even by the common folk, that once one possesses the required amount of wealth *zakaḥ* becomes obligatory. Now, if everyone paid their due *zakaḥ* then the state of the world would be a lot different. Why do we see so many dying from hunger, thirst etc. daily? Why are there people in the world without adequate shelter? Why are there families without basic necessities? This is because people are not paying their *zakah* correctly. For this reason giving charity towards spreading knowledge is better. When people are educated about the importance of *zakaḥ*, they are informed about the reward of giving *zakaḥ* and the punishment of not doing so and when people fully acknowledge this then they will give *zakaḥ*.

SCHOLARS WHO FAIL TO ACT UPON THEIR KNOWLEDGE

WHO IS A SCHOLAR?

It has been narrated on the authority of Ḥadīrat 'Ubādah ibn Ṣāmit رضي الله عنه that —

"A scholar is one who acts upon his knowledge, though it may be limited."

This means that those that do not act upon knowledge are only scholars by name. In reality, they are not scholars.

Mulla 'Alī al-Qārī رحمته الله writes —

"Verily those that do not act upon their knowledge are not scholars."

The above narration teaches us that although you may have a small amount of knowledge if you act upon whatever little you have then this is much more beneficial for you than having a lot of knowledge without any implementation.

THOSE WHO FACE THE MOST SEVERE PUNISHMENT

It has been narrated on the authority of Hadrat Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه that —

“The greatest of people in terms of punishment on the Day of Judgement will be a scholar whose knowledge did not benefit him.”⁷⁴

A scholar can benefit hundreds of people through his knowledge. However, until he does not benefit himself (implement) then he will still be liable and worthy of punishment. This is because knowledge is something which should benefit the possessor before anyone.

THE LIKE OF A LANTERN

It has been narrated on the authority of Hadrat Jundub رضي الله عنه that —

“The like of a scholar who teaches the people good and does not act upon his knowledge himself is like a lantern which enlightens people but burns itself.”⁷⁵

Such a scholar aids and avails others whilst harming himself. In a Quranic verse we have been ordered to protect ourselves first from the hellfire, then our families and then others. So, if a scholar does not avail himself and protects his/her family then he has acted against this verse.

AN INCIDENT FROM THE NIGHT OF THE ASCENSION

It has been narrated on the authority of Hadrat Anas رضي الله عنه that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said —

“On the night of ascension I saw people whose lips were being cut with scissors of fire. I asked “Who are they O Jibrail?” He said, “They are preachers from your nation that would command the people with good and would not act upon their knowledge themselves.”⁷⁶

This is a severe warning for those scholars that do not act upon the knowledge they preach. What use is preaching when your own ears fall deaf upon it? This is major deprivation. No one but the scholar himself is to blame.

⁷⁴ *Ibnul-Hind, Mula al-Din, Kamz al-Ummal, Jordan, Bayr al-Akhar al-Dawliyyah, 2014, Vol. 1 p. 191*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Tabrizi, Wala al-Din, Mishkat al-Masabih, Beirut, Dar Al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 2012, Vol. 2 p. 490*

THE IGNORANT SCHOLAR

Mulla 'Alī al-Qārī ؒ writes —

"Knowledge of the religion creates God-Wariness from which piety is attained and this is the reason for the greatness of a scholar. Therefore the one whose knowledge is unlike this then he is like an ignorant person. Rather, he is an ignorant person."

The above narration clearly states that only those who implement the knowledge they possess are worthy of being called a scholar. Hence, those that fail to utilize their knowledge to better themselves then they are no better than the ignorant.

THE ONE WHO FEARS ALLĀH ؒ

Imām Shāḥibī ؒ writes —

"Verily one who fears Allāh ؒ is truly a scholar."

One of the greatest intentions for seeking knowledge is to gain the fear of Allāh ؒ. Now, if a scholar falls short, hence, is unable to gain the fear of Allāh ؒ then he is not worthy of being called a scholar.

MISCHIEVOUS AND WORLDY SCHOLARS

MISCHIEVOUS SCHOLARS

It has been narrated on the authority of Hadīrat 'Āisha ؓ that the Prophet ﷺ said —

"The calamity for knowledge is forgetfulness and its wastage is that you teach it to those unworthy of it."

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Shaykh 'Abd al-Haq al-Muhadith al-Dehlawī ؒ writes —

"In reality in this hadith there is an indication towards the fact that you should abstain from those things that cause forgetfulness of knowledge i.e. committing sins and being preoccupied with worldly desires."

Just as Imām Shāḥibī states —

"I complained to Waki' about weak memory. So he advised me to refrain from sins. For verily knowledge is a bounty of The Almighty and the bounty of Allāh ؒ is not given to a wrongdoer."

77 Tabrizi, *Wali al-Din, Mishkat al-Masabih, Beirut, Dar Al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah*, 2012. Vol. 1 p. 69

It has been narrated that teaching knowledge to someone who is unworthy of it is like adorning a swine with jewellery. Just as how a swine is not worthy of being adorned with jewellery. Similarly, those unworthy should not be adorned with the jewels of knowledge. Indeed, the jewels of knowledge are far greater than any jewellery of this world.

It has been narrated on the authority of Hadirat Ahwas ibn Hakim ؓ that the Prophet ﷺ said —

“Behold! The most mischievous of the mischievous are mischievous scholars and the best of the best are the pious scholars.”

In light of the above narration we see that the best of people are from the category of scholars. However, not only this but the worst of people are also from the category of the scholars. This is because a good scholar is capable of benefiting people more than anyone else. As for a mischievous scholar, he is capable of destroying and harming people more than anyone else. The greatest harm people can incur is the loss of faith. This is exactly what the mischievous scholars are suited for. In consequence, it is clear that we are not obliged to follow all scholars. Some individuals who hold perennial ideologies believe that we should respect all the scholars and should not decipher between them.

To them we say that when clear distinction between mischievous and pious scholars has been made in the prophetic narrations, then who are you to lift this distinction? The distinction has been made to deter from the mischievous and call towards the pious. So why should we not act accordingly?

DISCOURTESY TOWARDS A SCHOLAR

DISRESPECTING A SCHOLAR

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said —

“The one who disrespects a scholar, verily he has disrespected knowledge and the one who has disrespected knowledge, verily he has disrespected the Prophet ﷺ and the one who has disrespected the Prophet ﷺ, verily he has disrespected Jibrāil ؑ and the one who has disrespected Jibrāil ؑ, he has verily disrespected Allāh ﷻ and the one who has disrespected Allāh ﷻ, Allāh ﷻ shall dishonour him on the Day of Judgement.”⁷⁸

Disrespecting a scholar is like disrespecting knowledge because a scholar stands for knowledge. When “scholar” is mentioned, knowledge comes to mind. Disrespecting knowledge is like disrespecting the Prophet ﷺ because the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ preached knowledge all his life and emphasized its importance. The knowledge we have today is through the blessings of the Prophet ﷺ. Disrespecting the Prophet ﷺ is like disrespecting Hadirat Jibrāil ؑ because Hadirat Jibrāil ؑ is the one who delivered the essence and the pivot of all knowledge (The Holy Qur’ān) to the Prophet ﷺ.

⁷⁸ *Baṣī, Fakhṛ al-Dīn, al-Tiḡār al-Kabīr, Beṭraṭ, Dar Al-Koṭob al-Ilmīyah, 2012. Vol 1, p. 174*

Disrespecting *Hadrat Jibrail* ﷺ is like disrespecting Allah ﷻ because *Hadrat Jibrail* ﷺ is the highest ranking Angel created by Allah ﷻ. Insulting the most distinguished invention of someone is indirectly insulting the inventor. It is obvious that the one who disrespects Allah ﷻ in this world, Allah ﷻ shall dishonour and humiliate him in the hereafter.

THE DOMINION OF ALLĀH ﷻ

It has been narrated on the authority of *Hadrat Abū Dhar* ؓ that —

"A scholar is Allāh's ﷻ dominion in the world. So, the one who finds faults in him, verily he shall be annihilated."⁷⁹

Again this is because he is indirectly finding faults in Allah ﷻ whilst Allah ﷻ is free from all faults.

THE DESTRUCTION OF FAITH

Imām *Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī* ؒ writes —

"The one who deems a scholar lowly has destroyed his faith."⁸⁰

Such severity is found in the issue of disrespecting scholars. One will not even realise that his faith has been ceased. Therefore, it is incumbent upon every individual to abstain from speaking ill of the scholars. Whether the scholar is at fault or not, the lay people should refrain from discussing and pointing fingers at the scholars. If in the case the scholar is at fault then it is the responsibility of other scholars to rectify his mistakes in a very polite manner. The public in no circumstance are to take this upon themselves.

FEAR OF DISBELIEF

Alā *Hadrat Imām Ahmad Ridā* ؒ writes —

"There is a fear of disbelief for one who has harred for a scholar without any reason; even if he does not disrespect (him)."

Therefore, we understand that scholars are not like us. Their rank is much loftier than ours. One should respect and revere a scholar more than his parents. This is because the rank of a scholar (teacher) is greater than that of the parents.

⁷⁹ *Hindī, Mā al-Dīn, Kamz al-Ummal, Jordan, Bayr al-Nkar al-Dawliyyah, 2014, Vol. 2, p. 1293*

⁸⁰ *Rāzī, Fakhr al-Dīn, al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr, Beirut, Dar Al-Katib al-Ilmiyyah, 2012, Vol. 1, p. 77*

DISEASED HEART

Allāh Hadrat Imām Ahmad Ridā رحمته further writes —

"If one speaks ill of a scholar for the sake of him being a scholar he is undoubtedly and explicitly a disbeliever. However, if one believes that respecting him (scholar) is obligatory due to his knowledge but still speaks ill of him, swears at him and humiliates him due to personal grudges then he is a severe transgressor and an immoral person. If he has a grudge without any reason then he has a diseased heart and is inwardly wicked and there is a chance of his disbelief. In conclusion, the one who has hatred for a scholar without any apparent cause then for him there is a fear of disbelief. Minah al-Rawḍ al-Azhar states "The apparent is that he has disbelieved."

The above extract is clear. Whether there is a reason or not one should not speak ill or have a grudge against a scholar. In the case where there is a "justifiable" cause then even in this circumstance one should give preference to the Islamic law, refrain from disrespecting a scholar, thereby saving one's self from punishment. In return one will be rewarded for subduing his desire to express his feelings.

LOWERING IN HELL

It has been stated in Tanwīr al-Absār that Allāh سبحانه said —

يَرْفَعُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ
دَرَجَاتٍ

"Allāh سبحانه will raise the believers among you, and those given knowledge, to high ranks."
(Qur'ān: 58:11)

The raiser is Allāh سبحانه. Therefore the one who lowers (disrespects) him, Allāh سبحانه shall lower him in hell.

It is the Almighty سبحانه who has elevated the station of the scholars. Who are we to denigrate them? Certainly we are in no position to act in such a manner. As for those unfortunate individuals who choose to do so then they should beware of the punishment they shall receive.

REFERENCE TO A SCHOLAR AS 'UWAYYIM

It has been stated in Majma' al-Anhur —

"The one who refers to a scholar as عَوَيْمٍ (small scholar) in a derogatory sense, verily he has disbelieved."

The above narration solidifies the fact that even the slightest forms of disrespect can take one out of the folds of Islam.

POISON

Allā Hadrat Imām Ahmad Ridā رحمۃ اللہ علیہ writes —

"It is haram to pick out faults in scholars and to lay accusations upon them. Due to this if one distances himself from a religious leader and refrains from asking questions then this is like poison for him."

Scholars are humans. All humans err. Therefore scholars err. This analogy is simple. Even the weakest of minds can acknowledge this. Why should we overlook all our defects and start pointing out the shortcomings of a scholar? Only the Prophets ﷺ and the Angels are Ma'sūm (free from sin). Therefore, even if we do see a scholar slip then we must give him the benefit of the doubt. Now, we see some individuals who distance themselves from such scholars and are reluctant to ask them questions. With regards to such individuals Allā Hadrat Imām Ahmad Ridā رحمۃ اللہ علیہ mentions that this is like poison for them. This means that doing so is causing harm to one's self and is depriving one's self from knowledge.

DISRESPECTING A SCHOLAR WITHOUT ANY REASON

Şadr al-Sharī'ah 'Allāmah Amjad 'Alī al-'Azamī رحمۃ اللہ علیہ writes —

"Disrespecting knowledge and scholars without any reason, i.e, merely because a scholar is a scholar of the religion, is disbelief."

Undoubtedly, this is the sign of a deccased heart. When a grudge with lay people without a cause is frowned upon then what must be the case of someone who has a grudge with something as pure as knowledge and someone as highly ranked as a scholar?

THE ILLITERATE MUFTĪ

ALLĀH ﷻ KNOWS BEST

It has been narrated on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ūd

—
 "O' people, those that have knowledge of something should express it. As for those who do not know they should say "Allāh ﷻ knows best". For verily saying "Allāh ﷻ knows best" when you do not is a part of knowledge."⁸¹

The first part of this narration is aimed at those scholars that possess knowledge yet fail to express it, they do not propagare it. This can be for many reasons; fear of people, fear of outcome and not wanting others to benefit. All these reasons are blameworthy. One will be questioned for not speaking out when people were in need of guidance due to their ignorance. As for the second part, this is in relation to those scholars or even lay people nowadays that are questioned but they are unaware of the answer. This is a priceless piece of advice for such people. When one is oblivious of the answer then he should simply say "Allāh ﷻ knows best". He should not attempt to use his current knowledge and try guess the answer, something a scholar may do. As for the lay people who do not possess any knowledge, they will try guess using their own intellect. In both cases they will be placing themselves in harm.

This is because giving a wrong answer will be classed as claiming something to be part of the religion which is not. Not only will one harm himself, he will also harm the questioner. If he accepts the answer and begins to act according to the incorrect ruling which he was told then the answerer is to blame. Unfortunately, we live in an age where people perceive it as depreciating to say "Sorry, I do not know." On the other hand, we see our predecessors, who were all mountains of knowledge, they were so humble that upon occasion they would direct the questioner to someone greater than themselves. This is true humility. Nowadays, everyone thinks they are the possessors of some status. There is nobody more knowledgeable than themselves. This is what has led to countless problems in our midst. If only we were to know that saying "Allāh ﷻ knows best" when you do not is also part of knowledge. If only we were to know the severity of claiming something to be from the religion which is not. If only we would show such courage in other, praiseworthy acts.

PEOPLE ARE OF FOUR TYPES

Imām Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī ﷻ writes —

"People are of four types —

1. Someone who has knowledge and knows he has knowledge. This is a scholar; so follow him.
2. Someone who has knowledge but does not know he has knowledge. This person is asleep; so awaken him.

⁸¹ Tabrizi, *Wāli al-Dīn, Mishkāt al-Masābiḥ, Beirut, Dar Al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah*, 2012, Vol. 1, P. 70

3. Someone who does not have knowledge and he knows that he does not have knowledge. This person needs guidance; so guide him.

4. Someone who does not have knowledge but he does not know that he does not have knowledge.

This is Satan; so stay away from him."⁸²

The first is a scholar so he will benefit you. The second is a scholar but he does not know he is scholar. The job of awakening such a person is not necessarily that of another scholar. Rather, the public can also take this upon themselves; they will be rewarded greatly. The third is an ignorant person that knows of his ignorance. In this case the job of guiding is only of the scholars. This is because if an ignorant person guides another ignorant then this will only lead to an increase in ignorance, not knowledge. Additionally, it is necessary upon such a person to adopt the company of the scholars, in order to seek guidance from them. Finally, the fourth is Satan. We must all keep our distances from such people. They are destroying themselves and have the potential to destroy all those that accompany them.

MISCELLANEOUS

BE ONE OF FOUR, NOT THE FIFTH

It has been narrated on the authority of Hadrat Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه that the Prophet ﷺ said —

"Rise a scholar or a student or a listener or a lover and do not be the fifth, as you shall perish."⁸³

In this narration we have been commanded to become a scholar. If one is unable to become a scholar then he should become a student. If one is unable to become a student then he should become someone who listens to the scholars. If one cannot do this then he should at least have love for the scholars. If one does not even do this then he shall perish.

We see that each of the four possibilities have something in common. That is knowledge and scholars. Hence, we understand that knowledge and scholars should be a pivotal part of our lives. As for those that do not make this the pivot they are placing themselves in harms way.

⁸² Razi, *Fakhr al-Din, al-Tafsir al-Kabir*, Beirut, Dar Al-Kotob al-Ilmiyyah, 2012, Vol. 1 p. 170

⁸³ Hindi, *Ala al-Din, Kunz al-Ummal*, Jordan, Bayr al-Akbar al-Dawliyyah, 2014, Vol. 1 p. 1295

THE ELDERS ARE A MEANS OF BLESSINGS

It has been narrated on the authority of Hadrat ibn 'Abbās ؓ that —

"Blessings are with your elders, the people of knowledge." ⁸⁴

From this we understand that it is highly important to respect our elders. We should sit with them and benefit from their knowledge. This does not only refer to religious knowledge but worldly too. Our elders have had experience of the world. They have learnt lessons from life. They are aware of the positives and negatives of actions. Therefore, one should sit with them and make use of their knowledge before it is too late. We also learn that blessings are with you for as long as you maintain ties with your elders. As for those that have distanced themselves from their elders then their lives are empty of blessings. In today's day and age we see this a lot. People abandon their parents/ grandparents. This is one of the greatest blessings to deprive yourself of. People only realise the magnitude of this blessing after it is too late.

THE REFORMATION AND CORRUPTION OF TWO GROUPS OF PEOPLE

It has been narrated on the authority of Hadrat 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbās ؓ that —

"When two groups of people are reformed then all the people are reformed and when they are corrupt all the people are corrupt. The scholars and the leaders." ⁸⁵

When a scholar is reformed, he will propagare religion rightfully and will benefit the people. He will have a positive effect on people as he holds a high post amongst them. As for a leader who is reformed, he is capable of reforming the people through his wisdom and power.

Now if these very people are to go astray and become corrupt then what hope do the people have? These are the ones the people would look up to. Hence, if the people become corrupt and stop practising then these two groups are to blame. From this we understand that scholars and leaders have a very high level of authority and responsibility. For this reason they will be accounted not only for themselves but for all those that were under their authority.

⁸⁴ *Hind, Ma al-Din, Kanz al-Ummal, Jordan, Bayr al-Akhar al-Dawliyyah, 2014, Vol. 1 p. 225*

⁸⁵ *Hind, Ma al-Din, Kanz al-Ummal, Jordan, Bayr al-Akhar al-Dawliyyah, 2014, Vol. 1 p. 194*

HALF OF KNOWLEDGE

It has been narrated on the authority of Hadrat ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه that —

"A good question is half of knowledge." ⁸⁶

The purpose of this is to encourage people towards asking questions and increasing their knowledge. If someone is unaware of something then he should ask. Holding back from asking will only result in bad. We should never be shy to ask anything. Some people think that asking a scholar about issues such as marital relationships is something inappropriate. However, this is not the case. Such topics are discussed in books of jurisprudence. Muslims have been given guidelines in terms of such issues. So why should one shy away from asking?

JURISPRUDENCE AND MYSTICISM

Imām Malik رضي الله عنه said —

"The one who studies jurisprudence and does not study mysticism, verily he has transgressed. The one who studies mysticism and does not study jurisprudence, verily he has become a disbeliever. The one who combines both, indeed he is on the correct path."

Mercy studying jurisprudence will make you aware of the rulings pertaining to worship. However, the true essence of worship can only be attained through mysticism. Hence, a person who studies jurisprudence without mysticism is referred to as a transgressor, as his apparent will suggest he possess the true essence of worship, but in reality he does not possess, but the rulings related to worship. As for the one who studies mysticism and does not study jurisprudence then he has committed disbelief. Why is the ruling of one so severe? The reason for that is because when one is oblivious of the knowledge of jurisprudence he is also oblivious of which actions are impermissible and which actions entail disbelief. Now, the one who is negligent and heedless of jurisprudence he will unknowingly commit such acts which will lead him to harm's way. It is a universal concept in Islam that everything should be done in a moderate manner. We identify a lesson of moderateness in this aspect too. We have not been commanded to solely study jurisprudence nor have we been ordered to exclusively study mysticism. What we have been instructed to do is to strike a balance between the two. We have been directed to study both in moderate proportions. The one who does this he is in the safe zone and on the correct path.

⁸⁶ *Hindl, Ma al-Din, Kanz al-Ummal, Jordan, Bayr al-Ahwar al-Damghyah, 2004, Vol. 1, p. 193*

DECORATION OF THE GARDEN OF THE WORLD

Imām Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī ؒ writes —

"The world is a garden which is decorated using five things —

1. The knowledge of the scholars.
2. The justice of the leaders.
3. The worship of the worshippers.
4. The loyalty of the traders.
5. The advice of the professionals.

Therefore, Iblīs upholds five types of flags besides each of these —

1. The flag of envy besides knowledge.
2. The flag of oppression besides justice.
3. The flag of ostentation besides worship.
4. The flag of dishonesty besides loyalty.
5. The flag of deception besides advice."⁸⁷

⁸⁷ Rāzī, *Fakhr al-Dīn, al-Taḥf al-Kubr, Beirut, Dar Al-Karab al-Ilmiyyah, 2012, Vol. 1, p. 168*

The goal of Iblīs is to ruin and destroy the decorations of the garden. The way he ruins the decoration using the knowledge of scholars is by placing envy in their hearts. When scholars become envious they cease from acting for the sake of Allāh ؑ and begin to act for the sake of fame and out of jealousy. This leads to their destruction. He incites just leaders towards oppression and injustice. This ruins their kingdoms and creates havoc amongst the people. His tactic for destroying the worship of the worshippers is by placing ostentation in their hearts. When worshippers become ostentatious they begin to worship to please others. This is classed as minor shirk (polytheism). As for those traders that exercise loyalty in their businesses he ruins them by provoking them towards dishonesty. Some then deceive the customers to save a few pennies which leads to their elimination. Finally those individuals who would sincerely advise others he places deception in their heart. Now, instead of giving sincere and beneficial advice, those individuals begin to deceive others by directing them towards harm and causes of loss.



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“Between the Prophets and the one whom death approaches - whilst seeking knowledge in order to revive Islam - is one level in Paradise.”

“Verily, the Ulema are the inheritors of the Prophets who leave only their knowledge behind as their legacy; not *dirham*, nor *dinar*.”

This translation of ‘The Merit Of Knowledge & Scholars’ by Shaykh Muḥammad Naqī ‘Alī Khān al-Qādirī g expands on the methodology of the scholars - discussing the virtues of seeking sacred knowledge and the merits that ensue.

This book is a must have for all students of knowledge who wish to combine sincere intentions with the best of etiquette; with both their teachers and their study of the deen.

- MUFTĪ MUḤAMMAD WĀJID IQBĀL

